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RESTORATIVE PRACTICE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY ON LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CHALLENGES

Sarah M. Gross
University of South Dakota, sarah.gross@k12.sd.us

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY ON LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENTATION, AND CHALLENGES

By

Sarah M. Gross

B.A., Black Hills State University, 2006
M.A., Walden University, 2010

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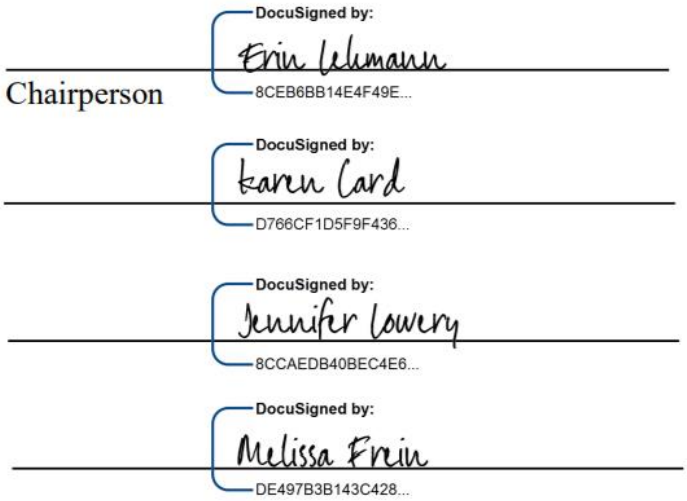

ABSTRACT

Students who receive exclusionary discipline (discipline that removes them from the classroom) are less likely to graduate from high school. It has long been documented that students of color, special education students, and boys are more likely to be assigned suspensions and miss classroom instruction. Discipline matrices have been in place across the country and disparities still exist in consequences assigned to individual students. To alter this current reality, school professionals have looked for alternatives. One possibility lies in restorative practices. Restorative practices are strategies that value the whole child and consider not only an act of harm, but also how that harm can be mended. Barriers to implementing restorative practices in schools include time, training, "old school" mentalities, and the lack of one single manual for carrying out restorative practices. Data for this type of philosophical change to discipline also is difficult to collect quantitatively. My research seeks to know how school leaders are implementing restorative practices and which specific leadership strategies are utilized. A descriptive case study is utilized to qualitatively describe and analyze one school district in a midwestern state. District leaders and high school principals were interviewed to add perspective to archival records, observations, and district documents.

This abstract of approximately 200 words is approved as to form and content. I recommend its publication.

Dr. Erin Lehmann, Ed.D., Committee Chair

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"There are years that are questions and years that answer" (Zora Hurston).

There are times in my life when I was not sure why I was being pulled, but the pull is so strong that there is no other option but to allow myself to be drawn in rather than dragged. This project was one of those times.

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grace. And finally, my committee for their knowledge, advice, and support. Each member has a diverse viewpoint that has stretched thinking.

After over three years of effort, I hope that this work furthers the conversation on restorative practices in high schools. Coming to the end of the process of researching and writing this dissertation has been a season of growth and change. It has been the welcome answer to many of the perennial question one wrestles with in life and I am grateful for the experience.

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Introduction

Public schools were developed to provide equal access to education for all citizens in the United States; however, many believe that equity in public schools is devolving (Miquel & Gargano, 2017). According to Balfanz et al. (2014), the use of exclusionary discipline practices such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions and expulsions has led to educational inequities between white students, students of color, and special education students. Restorative justice offers an alternative to more traditional discipline models and may provide a solution for mitigating injustice and the long-term consequences of getting in trouble at school (Gonzales et al., 2019; Mansfield et al., 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019).

Restorative justice is a theory of conflict resolution in which people are held directly responsible for their harmful actions, not by exclusionary discipline, but through ownership of their actions, maintenance of relationships with others in their environment, and repairing of harms done (Amstatz & Mullet, 2015; Buckmaster, 2016; Fine, 2018; Hopkins, 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Norris, 2019; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Zehr, 2015). Restorative justice is particularly relevant right now, both inside and outside of schools. As the Black Lives Matter movement has drawn our attention to institutionalized racism, historical suspension data from schools has shown a negative bias towards students of color and those with special education status (Khan & Slate, 2016; Nye, 2011; Pfleger & Wiley, 2012; Skiba et al., 2002). Educational reformers and researchers call for changes to disciplinary policies and practices as possible solutions to the bias shown in suspension data (Buckmaster, 2016; Hirschfield, 2018; McNeill et al., 2016).

Unfortunately, current policies and practices have led to the school-to-prison pipeline (Schiff, 2018). Children first get in trouble (often suspended) for minor offenses at school, and issues escalate until they receive criminal charges (Mallett, 2015). The school-to-prison pipeline is more noticeable for minority students, students in poverty, and students with disabilities (Balfanz et al., 2014; Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Although Khan and Slate (2016) noted that there is no evidence that poor students or students of color misbehave at higher rates, certain populations of students are assigned punitive consequences more often than others. The disparity in suspension data has led schools to begin to shift away from traditional punitive discipline methods (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Hirschfield, 2018; Payne & Welch, 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019; Weaver & Swank, 2020). Changing long-held disciplinary procedures, however, is not fast or easy (Gonzalez et al., 2019).

Restorative justice provides an alternative to punitive discipline systems (Anfara et al., 2013; McNeil et al., 2016). This philosophy honors everyone involved in an event and promotes healing after wrongdoings for both the perpetrator and the victim(s). Several strategies have been developed to provide teachers and administrators tools to better support students, including, but not limited to, advisories, circle time, and victim-offender conferences (Amstatz & Mullet, 2015; Sandwick et al., 2019). Restorative justice practices aim to create a culture of well-being (Morris & Vaandering, 2012). According to Morrison and Vaandering (2012), restorative justice creates relational ecologies or a school culture that focuses on relationships between and among students and staff. Once a relational ecology is established and maintained, the resulting relationships increase feelings of value for all who enter a school building, making everyone more likely to want to be there. Moreover,

restorative justice practices can keep more students in the classroom by lowering suspension and recidivism rates (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Mansfield et al., 2018).

Although restorative justice made its debut in Canada nearly fifty years ago (Reimer, 2011), it has only recently begun gaining traction in the United States. There are, however, pockets of implementation and data collection efforts across the nation (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Payne & Welch, 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019; Weaver & Swank, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Exclusionary discipline removes students from the classroom, negatively impacting their ability to graduate from high school successfully (Balfanz et al., 2014; McNeil et al., 2016). Predictably, students who encounter authority figures negatively at school more often have more significant interactions with the juvenile justice system (Fabelo et al., 2011; Katz-Amey, 2019). Data has long existed that shows that marginalized students are adversely affected by the implementation of exclusionary discipline policies (Balfanz et al., 2014; Gregory et al., 2018; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; McNeil et al., 2016).

School administrators are the most pivotal school staff members involved in decision-making about student discipline (Buckmaster, 2016; Khalifa et al., 2016) and therefore have the greatest ability to influence disciplinary practices. Khalifa (2018) stated that without intentional consideration, school leaders will unintentionally perpetuate and sustain policies and practices that oppress marginalized student populations. Understanding administrator beliefs, leadership styles, and discipline philosophies concerning restorative justice implementation will enable the broader education community to better understand the barriers that prevent leaders from dropping traditional punitive discipline models.

Significance of Study

Restorative practices ultimately have the potential to keep students in the classroom (Balfanz et al., 2014), thereby improving their chance of success in school. McNeil et al. (2016) noted that white students today have a 2/3 higher chance of being suspended than fifty years ago, that African American students are 1.5 times more likely to be suspended, and that Latino students are 1.3 times more likely to be suspended. Although objectivity and consistency are a goal, the effects of exclusionary discipline can't be ignored.

Restorative justice is a philosophy of treating people with dignity and respect (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012) that acknowledges human dignity and recognizes the motivational factors that affect behavior. As applied to school settings, this philosophy is an approach that treats staff, students, parents, and families independently and is not a one-size-fits-all model (Wachtel, 2003).

The purpose of this case study was to examine the beliefs, perceptions, and actions leaders take to incorporate school-wide restorative practices. It is also relevant and useful to find out what barriers are encountered that dissuade schools from considering alternative models.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence the implementation of restorative practices?
2. What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?
3. What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when considering school-wide restorative practices?

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to ensure a consistent understanding of these terms throughout the study.

Continuum of Practice: a framework for understanding restorative practices (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

Control: having influence over an individual or situation (Buckmaster, 2016).

Differential Processing: racial disparities in educator decisions regarding the consequences in response to an individual discipline incident (Gregory et al., 2018).

Culturally Responsive School Leadership: school leadership that intentionally focuses on marginalized or invisible populations of a school. It centers students' and teachers' cultural norms and brings their interests, families, and knowledge base to the forefront of planning and responding (Khalifa et al., 2016; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2012).

Expulsion: An action taken by the local education agency (LEA) removing a child from his/her regular school for disciplinary purposes for the remainder of the school year or longer in accordance with LEA policy (OSEP, 2020).

Harm: a general term that refers not to the specific rule that is broken but by how the incident affects the larger group or community (Karp & Breslin, 2001).

In-School Suspension: removal from instruction due to behavior to an alternative location in the school building (Sheets, 1996).

Out-of-School Suspension: removal from instruction and the school building (Gregory et al., 2018).

Punitive Discipline: a form of school discipline in which suspension, expulsion, and "zero tolerance" policies direct consequences or disciplinary actions (Sandwick et al., 2019).

Retributive Discipline Models: disciplinary plans that assign consequences for set behaviors without necessarily considering the larger communal effect (Karp & Breslin, 2001).

School-to-Prison Pipeline: policies and practices that systemically push at-risk youth out of mainstream public schools and into the juvenile or criminal justice system (Kim, 2010).

Support: provisions offered to an individual to aid in their ultimate flourishing and fulfillment of potential (Buckmaster, 2016).

Zero-Tolerance Policies: school discipline policies that contain pre-determined minimal punishments, typically suspension, for students who engage in certain behaviors (Buckmaster, 2016).

Conceptual Framework

Balance is necessary for respecting students' cultures and values while maintaining a productive learning environment (Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2012). Culturally Responsive School Leadership is school leadership that intentionally focuses on marginalized or invisible populations of a school. It centers students' and teachers' cultural norms and brings their interests, families, and knowledge base to the forefront of planning and responding (Khalifa et al., 2016; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2012). Khalifa (2018) provided a clear example of a situation in which a student continually spoke loudly and had been reprimanded in the past. The Culturally Responsive School Leader can recognize the cultural difference and teach staff to avoid overreacting to the student's habits. A related, yet different framework is presented by Gorski, in equity literacy. Similarly, a person with equity literacy is aware of

inequity and working to sustain positive change (Gorski, 2019). In a culturally responsive school, students' cultures and values are leveraged to emphasize and personalize learning.

Overview

The midwestern state in which the study takes place has a small population. Nearly 1/3 of the state's population resides in the two largest cities. The state's geography is mostly prairie, containing ranches and farms, numerous small towns, and very large Native American reservations. This study focuses on high schools in one of the two largest cities.

The effects of restorative practices are difficult to measure quantitatively (Norris, 2019). High schools are active places with hundreds of students taking courses. The interaction of values, ideals, goals, and relationships makes schools sources of great learning, frustration, success, and struggle. The values espoused by a school's staff may or may not always align with the values students bring from their homes. Harms can occur, and restorative practices can be utilized; however, because of the numerous variables and ever-changing dynamics of a school, it is difficult to quantitatively measure the relationship between the use of restorative justice practices and other more traditional forms of discipline. Because case studies are useful for determining whether a specific program or initiative has been successfully implemented (Mills and Gay, 2016), a comparative case study of two high schools utilizing restorative practices will be utilized. The case study will detail existing administrative actions, practices, and processes and the perceived challenges and barriers for implementing restorative justice at the high school level.

Organization of the Study

The midwestern state in which the study takes place has work ahead to create equity for students attending K-12 public schools. Learning more about restorative justice through

the research questions presented in Chapter 1 will help educators change current paradigms in school discipline and leadership. Chapter 2 is a literature review, beginning with research on exclusionary discipline, examining numbers based on race and gender. Next within the literature review, leadership styles that align with restorative justice practices are explored. Then, the literature review presents a comprehensive explanation of 11 elements related to the whole-school implementation of restorative practices, followed by barriers that are known to exist. In Chapter 3, the case study methodology will be explored, and the particular case chosen will be explained. In Chapter 4, the results of the study will be presented, and Chapter 5 will discuss any themes, recommendations, and conclusions that can be drawn from this study.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Educational leaders are re-examining discipline practices because of the detrimental effects of exclusionary discipline, a form of discipline that removes students from their normal educational setting (Balfanz et al., 2014), particularly because disciplinary consequences assigned by schools tend to vary widely concerning race, gender, and special education status (Gage et al., 2020; Losen & Gillespie, 2012). Although many outside of education have believed that policies, when followed, should be blind to student identity, individual districts and administrators apply policies in vastly different ways depending on race (Khalifa, 2018). As a response to this inequity, restorative justice practices are gaining traction in many schools in the United States (Gonzales et al., 2019; Mansfield et al., 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019). Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature regarding restorative practices by first explaining the historical background on discipline and restorative justice. It then expands on how restorative practices are implemented in a school setting. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the perceived barriers to the implementation of restorative practices.

Historical Background on Discipline and Restorative Justice

Not surprisingly, students' inappropriate behavior is as old as our public school system, and varying theories, strategies, and plans have been proposed for improving behavior (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015; Tyler et al., 2007). Common consequences in public school systems include teacher redirection, detentions, suspensions, and fines (Allman & Slate, 2011). These consequences, while common, are not always applied equally to all students.

One example of disparities in discipline assignments was showcased in a 2009 lawsuit in South Dakota. Antoine v. Winner School District illustrated the need to shift and monitor disciplinary practices (Kim, 2010). Just 12 years ago, with help from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a lawsuit was brought against the Winner School District in rural South Dakota, referencing data from the Office of Civil Rights. The case highlighted differential processing, or the inequitable use of discipline policies, and the resulting consequences for students that had been occurring. Native American students were being assigned exclusionary discipline at far higher rates than their non-Native peers. This led to lower graduation rates and decreased success in school for the Native American students. The district was required to revise law enforcement referral policies, hire additional staff to be a liaison between school staff and Native American community members, and provide ongoing training to staff.

Zero-Tolerance Policies

The high number of punitive consequences documented over time are related to many states' use of zero-tolerance policies (Buckmaster, 2016). Zero-tolerance policies are policies that treat specific offenses with standardized consequences (Allman & Slate, 2011; Buckmaster, 2016; Lustick, 2017). An example of a common zero-tolerance policy is being in possession of alcohol or drugs; such policies lead to specific consequences regardless of the context (Karp & Breslin, 2001). Initially, zero-tolerance policies were adopted for serious offenses, but gradually they were used for less serious or dangerous offenses such as tobacco possession or more subjective school disruption (Allman & Slate, 2011). Because of the overuse of zero-tolerance policies, initiatives such as Positive Behavior Intervention Support

(PBIS) and restorative practices have gained traction to increase engagement and decrease suspensions (Lustick, 2017).

Exclusionary Discipline in Schools

There are several ways that students can be excluded from the traditional classroom setting: in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) collects data on various school factors, from the number of students enrolled in a geometry course to various disciplinary actions (OCR, 2021). The data is disaggregated by race, sex, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) status, and grade ranges. A great deal of analysis on exclusionary discipline draws from this data.

In-School Suspension. In-school suspension is a common type of exclusionary discipline in which students are removed from the general education classroom. Morris and Howard (2003) described four types of in-school suspension: punitive, academic, therapeutic, and the individual model. The punitive model is most common and generally has strict rules in which students spend time in an in-school suspension (ISS) room. Students may be assigned cleaning duties as a part of their obligation (Morris and Howard, 2003). On the other hand, an academic model approaches student misbehavior as a signal of a learning difficultly, utilizing and training staff to diagnose a student's educational challenges (Morris and Howard, 2003). The therapeutic model of in-school suspension includes a self-regulation program along with individual and group counseling in the student's time away from the general education classroom. Finally, a fourth, more recent model is an individual model. This model has components of each of the previous three but is flexible to accommodate a student's needs. Regardless of the style of in-school suspension, students are removed from their general education classroom for some time.

As the level of infraction rises, the administrator's ability to use informal consequences diminishes (Fabelo et al., 2011). Gregory et al. (2018) described the variability of consequence assignments for students as differential processing. The difference in how administrators process an offense makes the term *differential processing* apt. Due to the options administrators have, differential processing is seen most when assigning suspensions (Gregory et al., 2018).

Out-of-School Suspension. Out-of-school suspension requires that students serve their suspension from school away from their normal school building. According to research by Losen and Gillespie (2012), suspension rates varied significantly by ethnicity, with one in six Black students, one in 13 Native American students, one in 14 Latino students, and one in 20 white students being suspended in a given year. Balfanz et al. (2014) studied a ninth-grade cohort in Florida during the 2000-2001 school year, tracking students five years beyond high school; data from over 181,000 students found that 39% of Black students were suspended at least once, compared to 22% of white students. The same study found that students classified as Native American, multi-racial, free and reduced lunch, special education, or limited English proficiency were all more likely to be suspended for minor infractions.

Expulsion. Expulsion results in a student no longer attending school in the school or district because of disciplinary action (OCR, 2021). Research has consistently found that expulsion has a negative impact on future school achievement (Gage et al., 2020). Three types of expulsion exist in the OCR database: Expulsion Under Zero Tolerance Policies, Expulsion with Educational Services, and Expulsion Without Educational Services (ORC, 2021).

Disparities in Suspension Rates

Despite school districts' reasoning behind the exclusionary discipline, such practices have lasting impacts. A student's likelihood of dropping out-of-school doubles when he or she receives a suspension (Balfanz et al., 2014). Balfanz et al. (2014) further reported an inverse relationship between suspension and the likelihood of continuing education; as the number of suspensions increases, the likelihood that the student graduates and enrolls in post-secondary schooling decreases. Losen and Gillespie (2012) noted that suspended students often become repeat offenders, making researchers question the effectiveness of suspending students. Poor academics, retention, negative attitude towards school, poor attendance, fighting, and dropping out are all associated with students who receive more disciplinary consequences (Payne & Welch, 2018).

Retributive discipline models are disciplinary plans that assign consequences for set behaviors without necessarily considering larger communal effects (Karp & Breslin, 2001). Exclusionary discipline does this unapologetically, as students are asked to leave the classroom or school (McNeill et al., 2016). This type of retributive disciplinary process creates distance and separates offenders from the community and those they have harmed, affecting their ability to complete school (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015). In an analysis of over 9,000 articles on suspension, expulsion, and exclusionary discipline, McNeil et al. (2016) found no evidence that exclusionary discipline measures successfully prevent future misbehavior. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education's Secretary remarked that U.S. schools are overusing exclusionary discipline and applying policies in discriminatory ways (Duncan, 2014). Traditional leadership forms have perpetuated the use of these retributive discipline practices (Khalifa et al., 2016). For this reason, school districts have sought alternative plans,

consequences, and matrices to counteract such measures, and many are turning to restorative justice to fill the need (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Hirschfield, 2018; Payne & Welch, 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019; Weaver & Swank, 2020).

Such sentiments extend to those who interact with students the most. Teachers, for instance, feel that "stoplight" systems, detentions, and suspensions do not build classroom community, causing them to crave something different (Erb & Erb, 2018). Because schools are the frontline for youth to learn social skills, they have a unique opportunity to support student development. Macready (2009) suggested valuing relationships through restorative justice could meet this crucial need.

History of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice likely originated in native cultures from New Zealand, Australia, and Canada (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Payne & Welch, 2018). The aboriginal people of New Zealand, the Maori, and many Native American tribes across North America have gathered in circles for centuries, first around the fire and later in tribal council settings (Pranis, 2005). Ryan and Ruddy (2015) described a pivotal moment for restorative justice in 1989, when the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act passed in New Zealand. This appears to be the first prominent appearance of a modified Maori circle in juvenile court. The use of a circle in a formal setting and the legislative act has transferred the indigenous practice to the mainstream. Reimer (2011) suggested an even earlier emergence of restorative justice occurred in Canada in 1974. Instead of a punitive consequence, youth were expected to face their behavior and pay restitution for their crime. In the United States, the concept of restorative justice emerged 30 to 40 years ago in the criminal justice realm

(Zehr, 2015). Since the mid-2000s, schools have begun to implement many iterations and variations of restorative justice practices.

According to Morrison and Ahmed (2006), there are two main ways to conceptualize restorative justice: a values conception in which the values and principles of humanity are central to dealing with misbehavior and a process conception in which parties come together to problem solve and make atonement for harm and wrongdoing. The adage "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind" describes many exclusionary discipline systems and their lack of humanity. Dzur (2003) cited "moral logic," meaning that just because something caused pain, pain does not have to be returned (p. 282). The values conceptualization makes sure all parties are considered. The victims, offenders, and the community should form an equilateral triangle in which the values of each party should be involved in a harmful event (Umbreit et al., 2015). In the process conception, the emotional journey provided by the restorative conference's progression allows participants to come to terms with the event and heal (Hopkins, 2016). Morrison and Vaandering (2012) wrote that "human beings are relational and justice is understood broadly as honoring the inherent worth of all and is enacted through relationships" (p. 144). The process embedded in restorative justice enables the mending of relationships and restoration to be at the center of all interactions. Several school-based restorative practices encourage this type of social and emotional development: using restorative language, peer mediation, classroom circles, restorative thinking plans, daily check-ins, restorative conferences, small- and large-group meetings, community service, restitution, and integration into the curriculum (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Macready, 2009; Payne & Welch, 2018).

What to Call It?

Restorative justice, restorative practices, restorative interventions, restorative measures, restorative discipline, and restorative approaches are all synonyms for the same basic ideas (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Gonzalez et al., 2019; Sandwick et al., 2019; Song & Swearer, 2016). Many educators have shied away from using the term *justice* due to its legal, controversial, or subjective nature (Sandwick et al., 2019). *Restorative practices* have emerged as the most frequently used description of restorative justice in a school setting (IIRP, 2010).

Implementation of Restorative Practices

Restorative Justice

Scholars agree restorative justice is difficult to define precisely (Latimer et al., 2005; Song & Swearer, 2016; Zehr, 2015). Most scholars (Amstatz & Mullet, 2015; Buckmaster, 2016; Fine, 2018; Hopkins, 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Norris, 2019; Sandwick et al., 2019; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Zehr, 2015) have described it as a theory of conflict resolution in which people are held responsible for their harmful actions not by exclusionary discipline, but through ownership of their actions, maintenance of relationships with others in their environment, and repair of harms done through empathy and forgiveness.

Two foundations of restorative justice are honoring individuals as human beings and attempting to right as many wrongs as possible (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Zehr, 2015). Payne and Welch (2018) described the main goal as building positive relationships while eliminating negative feelings such as anger and humiliation. Restoration changes the focus of discipline from rules and laws to building and maintaining relationships (Payne & Welch,

2018; Reimer, 2011). The philosophy goes beyond simple consequences for the perpetrator of a wrong.

Restorative practices could fit under a school's multi-tier system of supports (Katic et al., 2020). Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is an umbrella term that refers to proactive supports that schools can provide to help students be successful at school (Averill & Rinaldi, 2011). Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) are the two most common approaches under MTSS. Response to Intervention is a systematic approach that can lead to special service testing (Yell, 2019). School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support is an effort to consistently utilize research-based strategies to intervene based on data collection for students who are struggling to manage their behaviors (Gage et al., 2020). Both RtI and PBIS break students into three levels or tiers of support. All students receive support in the general education classroom, but as more support is required, more is offered and documented. Averill & Rinaldi (2011) remarked that data collection is a major component of both systems.

The MTSS system is a *multi*-tiered system of supports, and therefore the interventions build on one another. Positive Behavior Intervention Support and restorative practices could be implemented simultaneously because PBIS is highly proactive, while restorative practices are focused on mending harm after it occurs (McNeill et al., 2016). Additionally, RtI, PBIS, and restorative practice are similar in that they are all tiered, delivering whole-school strategies as well as targeted supports (Mansfield et al., 2018).

Components of Restorative Practices

The components of restorative practices can be grandiose, requiring planning and preparation to a simple interaction or question. Those who promote restorative practices

praise the system's malleability, while others struggle to understand what "counts" as restorative practices due to the diverse number of interpretations (Sandwick et al., 2019). Thorsborne and Blood (2013) delineated a Continuum of Practice that illustrates specific restorative strategies to make this abstract concept more understandable. As seen in Figure 1, the Continuum of Practice parallels incidents/issues with an appropriate restorative response.

Complementing Thorsborne & Blood's Continuum of Practice, Acosta et al. (2019) described 11 Essential Elements developed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) in 1999 for their Safer Saner Schools program. The Essential Elements, as shown in Figure 2, are grouped into school-wide elements that could be used by all staff members, broad-based elements, and targeted elements. The school-wide elements are affective statements, restorative questions, small impromptu conferences, proactive circles,

Figure 1

Continuum of Practice **(Thorsborne & Blood, 2013*)***

Minor incident/issues		Major incident/issue
Affective statement Relational conversation Restorative 'chat'	Class meeting and problem-solving circles Mini-conferences	Restorative/community conference Restorative mediation healing circle Class conferences (serious dysfunction)
Informal	Becoming more formal	Formal
Requires skill and little preparation	Requires reasonable skill and more preparation	Requires high-level skill and comprehensive preparation
Informal follow-up	Formal follow-up	Formal follow-up

responsive circles, and the fundamental hypothesis. The next group of elements is specific to instructional and administrative staff. These are considered broad-based elements: fair processes, reintegrative management of shame, restorative staff community, and restorative approach with families. Finally, the most formal and targeted element is the full restorative conference. Just as Thorsborne and Blood's continuum moves from informal to more formal responses, so do the Essential Elements.

International Institute for Restorative Practices' Essential Elements

The following section summarizes the IIRP's Whole-School Implementation with the corresponding research for each element.

Figure 2

***IIRP's 11 Essential Elements* (IIRP, 2010)**

School-wide elements	Affective statements Restorative questions Small impromptu conferences Proactive circles Responsive circles Fundamental hypothesis
Broad-based elements	Fair processes Reintegrative management of shame Restorative staff community restorative Approach with families
Targeted element	Restorative conference

Affective Statements. Affective statements are on the most informal side of the continuum. These statements or sentence starters help students express their emotions and communicate how they feel (IIRP, 2010). For example, Making Amends, a program created by third-grade teachers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, highlights the essence of restorative

justice (Erb & Erb, 2018). Instead of punitive discipline, the Making Amends group talks to their students about filling up their "bucket," making amends, and re-filling a bucket that has been emptied. Posters hang in the classrooms with sentences starters such as “Dear _____, I am sorry that I _____. Next time I will _____” (Erb & Erb, 2018, p. 97). In an elementary school, teachers could introduce vocabulary and examples of behavioral situations during the morning meeting or carpet time. Honoring the learning process to build the community is crucial to the teachers' success (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013).

Restorative Questions. Restorative questions are guiding questions that can support dialogue between parties. Howard Zehr has been considered the father of modern versions of restorative justice. Zehr (2015) outlined three guiding questions that epitomize restorative justice:

- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- Who must address the needs, put right the harms, and restore the relationship?

These starter questions can help form a conversation between parties as they discuss incidents and determine how to move forward. These three primary questions have been added to and modified by various practitioners (IIRP, 2010; Hopkins, 2016), but they are regularly used to facilitate dialogue between parties, allowing each side to be heard.

Small Impromptu Conferences. Impromptu conferences are used to process smaller incidents such as misbehavior on the bus, inappropriate playground behavior, or disagreements between students. They usually involve only a few students. Students, with support from adults, work through restorative questions in a small group. This processing

time and space allows students to express their feelings and utilize healthy problem-solving techniques to move forward (IIRP, 2010).

Small impromptu conferences can be utilized in many settings, but timing is important. The conference should happen as soon as possible following an incident (IIRP, 2010). Also, adult or classroom training is important for the conversation to have structure.

Proactive Circles. Proactive circles are routine circles used to build community in the school setting. According to Zehr (2015), circles tend to be the primary approach used in educational settings. Pranis (2005) noted that "circles assume a universal human wish to be connected to others in a good way" (p. 24). Borrowing practices from indigenous cultures, most circles include the following: a talking piece or symbolic piece that identifies who the speaker is, a ceremony to begin, a facilitator called a keeper, guidelines for the procedure, and use consensus for decision-making (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012).

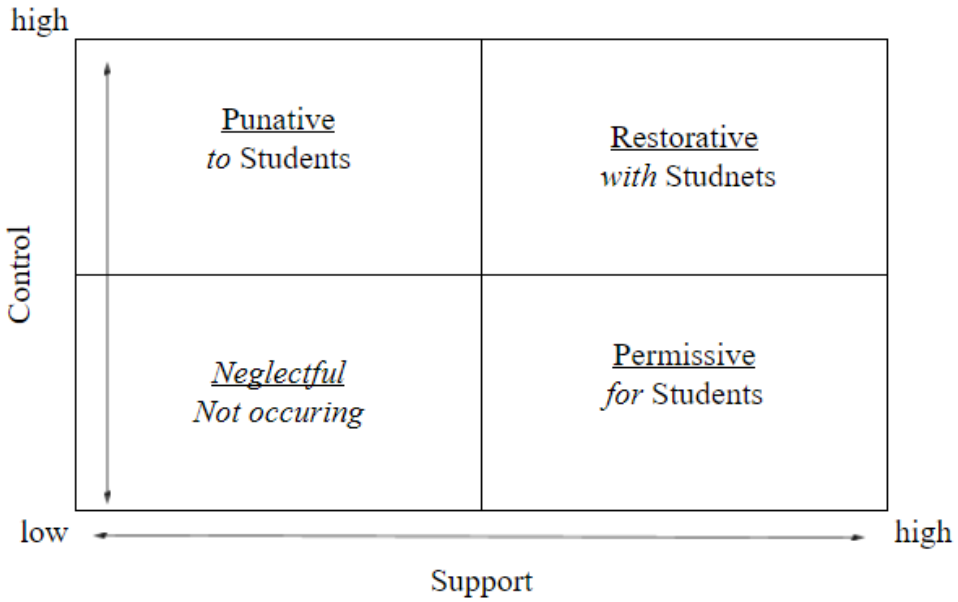
Proactive circle approaches in the educational setting are often used. Morning meetings are welcoming and value interactions in which students share and play a game or other community-building activity; the group is arranged in a circle, allowing each class member equal importance. End-of-day circles play the same role in building relationships and open dialogue. They build the social dynamics that allow for restorative circles to occur later after an incident occurs. The IIRP (2010) stated that 80% of circles should be proactive.

Responsive Circles. In a responsive circle, the chairs are arranged in a circle with no physical barriers, allowing members to introduce themselves, talk, share feelings and stories, and listen to one another (Hopkins, 2016; Mansfield et al., 2018). The literal circular arrangement and the use of a talking piece ensure a nonhierarchical opportunity to speak without interruption (Umbreit et al., 2015). The safety of sharing allowed in the circle helps

focus on the importance of each person and his or her opinions. Pranis (2005) shared an example of a circle that was healing for a student who had been referred for attendance. Throughout the conversation with the school staff and his mother, the student revealed that he had not been comfortable at school since being suspended two years earlier. During the circle, the tenth grader finally admitted that he

Figure 3

Social Discipline Window (modified from Wachtel, 2003)



now felt that the school personnel cared about him and his perspectives, something he had not felt in years (p. 15).

Fundamental Hypothesis. The most vital component of the IIRP's Essential Elements is the fundamental hypothesis. The hypothesis is based on the "interplay of control/pressure and support" (IIRP, 2010, p. 26). One method for understanding the fundamental hypothesis is the Social Discipline Window (Buckmaster, 2016), a two-

dimensional grid that school personnel can use to conceptualize their interactions and relationships with students (see Figure 3).

The grid illustrates the actions of the caregiver, teacher, or parent as neglectful, permissive, punitive, or restorative. The axes relate the continuum of support to control. Fine (2018) suggested that when support and control are both high, decisions are made together. Wachtel (2003) argued that when adult responses to misbehavior are simultaneously high in support and high in control, such actions should be considered restorative. Kelly and Thorsborne (2014) amended Wachtel's original window, providing descriptions to each square. Adults functioning in the restorative quadrant, for instance, can be described as authoritative (not authoritarian), reintegrative, democratic, firm, and fair.

As support and control are increased, the adult's behaviors move from *not*, to *for* or *to*, and finally *with* [emphasis added] (Buckmaster, 2016; Wachtel, 2003). Buckmaster (2016) touted that this is the key idea of restorative practices: students can be the best version of themselves due to adults who are acting *with* them instead of carrying out punitive discipline policies *on* or *to* them. Buckmaster (2016) clearly defined each area in terms of the educator: teachers who do not establish any expectations for students and do not provide continued support are neglectful, whereas teachers who provide support, set high expectations, and work *with* their students as they guide them in their classrooms are restorative.

Fair Processes. Historically, research on justice and fair processes have come from courts, trials, and sentencing, but in the last two decades, more studies and literature have been developed on how concepts of justice affect organizations such as schools (Dzur, 2003; Macready, 2009). Kazemi (2016) described four types of justice: distributive, procedural,

interpersonal, and informational. Distributive justice concerns fairness in allocations or equity in costs and benefits as a result. Procedural justice describes how the final decision or result was reached. The processes of restorative practices connect directly to procedural justice because the restorative conference is the vehicle that carries the process (Morrison & Ahmed, 2006). Interpersonal justice relates to how the procedure was enacted, which focuses on relational aspects and the maintenance of dignity. Finally, informational justice emphasizes who is in the know and why (Kazemi, 2016, p. 106). The what (distributive justice), how (procedural justice), feelings (interpersonal justice), and access (informational justice) aspects make up the broader concept of "justice."

Studies are not always consistent in determining which type of justice is more relevant. Kazemi (2016) argued that informational justice is the most crucial form of justice, while Tyler et al. (2007) focused on procedural justice. Heuer et al. (2007) focused their body of research on the importance of procedural fairness for satisfaction among those involved. Both informal and procedural justices lead to feelings of fairness, which have been linked to legitimizing consequences. When people consider either the procedure toward consequences or the consequences themselves legitimate, they are more committed to following rules and laws (Tyler et al., 2007). For this reason, the theory of restorative justice aims to provide people with a process (procedural justice) that builds support and loyalty for the organization while simultaneously establishing trust in the process (Tyler et al., 2007).

Justice and healing are not only for the victim of an incident but also for the perpetrator (Zehr, 2015). Whether the event under consideration is a fight, bullying, or a world event, considering all aspects of justice to ensure an overall fair process can improve the school's learning environment, turning the focus to learning rather than to injustice.

Restorative Staff Community. Utilizing restorative practices with staff builds and maintains a healthy team. Staff members in a school setting thus can use restorative practices to model and resolve conflict amongst themselves. The affective statements, restorative questions, small impromptu conferences, and circles help staff feel valued in the school or workplace (IIRP, 2010; Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014). Although this element is targeting staff members, those who experience the benefits of restorative practices personally can then use them with their students.

Kelly and Thorsborne (2014) detailed a script for a restorative conference between staff members. The facilitator begins by establishing the purpose of the meeting, describing what it is and what it is not, and establishing the confidential nature of such a meeting. Next, the participants all answer some type of question that allows everyone to enter the conversation and have a voice. Questions then guide the group through the incident or pattern of behavior, making sure everyone is heard. The questions come right from the restorative questions, making the restorative practice concepts feel natural to the staff.

Reintegrative Management of Shame. The strength of restorative justice resides in its underlying psychology of shame management. Affect Script Psychology (ASP), also known as Human Being Theory, is a theory of restorative practice, biology, and human motivation (Thorsborne, 2016). This theory recognizes that biology is always at work when searching for and maintaining authentic human connections while developing scripts to handle emotions (Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014).

Central to Affect Script Psychology is the compass of shame. Initially described by Nathanson in 1992, the compass identifies behaviors that manifest themselves because of shame related to underlying issues. The scripts or behaviors are withdrawal, self-attack, and

avoidance (Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014). The use of restorative justice practices can help students in the school setting manage their shame and related behaviors. Kelly and Thorsborne (2014) were proponents of reintegrative shaming in which inappropriate behavior is condemned but separated from the person, most basically, communication such as "We disagree with your behavior, but do not think you are a bad person." Shame is, essentially, feeling bad about one's self or a specific incident or behavior (Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014). The incident, however, does not define the person, so identifying the difference between a bad person and a bad action is the focus.

Tyler et al. (2007) wrote about the motivating effects of shame. The restorative conference utilizes three stages of healing to facilitate the relationship's rebuilding: stories, intense feelings, and plans for the future. Through the conference, people confront the harm that was carried out. This confrontation frequently brings forward the shame of those involved, allowing discussion, and mending of broken ties while motivating future rule-following and healing (Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014; Tyler et al., 2007).

Restorative Approach with Families. The IIRP (2010) described the utilization of restorative practices with families as opportunities to build genuine relationships. Connections with families can be made by educating families on the use of restorative practices at school, including families in the circle processes, and actively involving families in the discipline process. IIRP (2010) emphasized that utilizing a restorative approach with families continually values the family’s contributions and input. The valuing of family input strengthens the relationship between the school and family, emphasizing restorative work's team nature.

Restorative Conferences. Finally, restorative conferences are the most formal activity on the Continuum of Practice. This type of conference is held in response to a larger incidence of harm. Harm is a general term that refers not to the specific rule that is broken but to how the incident affects the larger group or community (Karp & Breslin, 2001). The conference includes a neutral party that facilitates a discussion about a specific incident (Mansfield et al., 2018). The literature describes the meeting's primary goal as providing a space to allow the perpetrator of harm and the victim to discuss and understand each other's lived experience (Dzur, 2003; Karp & Breslin, 2001; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Hearing the perspective of people on the other side of the event is central to the process. Frequently, there is a build-up to the formal restorative conference with preparation meetings with offender and victim before larger group meetings (Moore, 2018). While retributive discipline policies or consequences put distance between the victim and offender, restorative conferences bring the parties together (Ryan & Ruddy, 2015).

In the broader justice system, such conferences are called Victim Offender Reconciliation Programs, or VORP meetings, and were originally mediated by police officers (Tyler et al., 2007). More recently, community volunteers serve as trained mediators to support and structure the dialogue without inputting their ideas on the event (Dzur, 2003). The process's structure is crucial. The basic structure includes an initial contact and voluntary agreement to participate, a pre-conference with facilitators, the restorative conference itself, and follow-up meetings or obligations (McNeill et al., 2016; Norris, 2019; Umbreit et al., 2015). Generally, these more formal conferences are designated by the district attorney's office and may be held at a school if the incident occurred in the school setting.

Educational Leadership

Implementation of restorative practices requires intentional guidance by the school administrator. Numerous theories of leadership exist; three of the most common leadership styles in education are transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and instructional leadership (Northouse, 2016; Marzano et al., 2005). Leaders who are not familiar with racism, bias, and the accompanying oppression may, however, replicate systems that tend to inadvertently reinforce this oppression (Khalifa, 2018; Khalifa et al., 2016). Northouse (2016) summarized the challenge that leaders must undertake in leading diverse organizations: they must overcome their ethnocentrism while having confidence in values derived from their cultural heritage.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL)

Recent research from Khalifa et al. (2016) asserted that transactional, instructional, and transformation leadership are insufficient to address the needs of students who have historically been oppressed. Instead, Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL) changes the typical focus of school from white middle-class values to that of the most marginalized or invisible populations of a school. CRSL works to bring students' and teachers' cultural perspectives and knowledge into the school (Khalifa et al., 2016; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2012). Therefore, CRSL has the potential to address differential processing related to race, income, or disabilities (Gregory et al., 2018). Khalifa (2018) argued that desiring equity and talking about sensitive issues is inadequate to create change. He contended that school leaders must embrace, create, and enact structures that will support equity and inclusion.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership is distinguished by four specific behaviors (Khalifa, 2018). First, a leader must be critically self-reflective. Critical self-reflection means that leaders examine their place in the broader system and the roles they can play in furthering oppression or empowerment. Second, the leader must incorporate a culturally responsive curriculum and train teachers on meaningful teaching. Third, the leader must work to encourage an inclusive school environment. Finally, the Culturally Responsive School Leader will incorporate students' local environments and situations to make school meaningful.

What Khalifa et al. (2016) termed Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Gorski (2019) explained as Equity Literacy. Gorski (2019) defined five abilities that are at the center of Equity Literacy. The first of the five abilities of Equity Literacy are the ability to recognize even the subtlest biases, inequities, and oppressive ideologies. The second ability is the capability to respond to the identified bias, inequities, and oppressive ideologies in the immediate term. The third ability is the capacity to redress these same ideas long-term by their root causes. The fourth ability is the skill to cultivate equitable anti-oppressive ideologies and institutional cultures. Finally, the fifth ability to have Equity Literacy is the facility to sustain equitable and anti-oppressive classrooms, schools, ideologies, and institutional cultures (Gorski, 2019).

One characteristic of both Culturally Responsive School Leadership and Equity Literacy is the use of data to identify inequity. School leaders examine and scrutinize academic and disciplinary data and question disparities (Gorski, 2019; Khalifa et al., 2016). By questioning disparities, the leader urgently requires alternatives to traditional systems that have created or allowed inequities. Bal et al. (2018) stated "racial disproportionality has been

overwhelmingly conceptualized from an individualistic, outcome-oriented perspective that locates the problem within individuals—at the expense of targeting the systems" (p. 1009). Both Gorski (2019) and Khalifa et al. (2016) identified that the leader takes definitive action to remedy inequity he or she knows exists in the system, rather than taking action against or toward the individual.

Decision-making

Within the school setting, the principal is empowered by the school district and state to take definitive actions within the school (Khalifa et al., 2016). Buckmaster (2016) refined this decision-making power concerning discipline, noting that school district policies on discipline are carried out primarily by the principal or assistant principal. Most people and school staff believe that discipline decision is based on personal beliefs and rationality (Lustick, 2020). Lustick's writings in 2017 and 2020, however, described administrator decisions that did not match either their beliefs or rationality. Her case study on leaders in New York City schools, for instance, found other factors that influenced decision-making, such as other principals' expectations, community perceptions, and teacher criticism.

Administrative decision-making is challenging (Frick, 2008; Lustick, 2020). In his modified phenomenological study, Frick (2008) described the dilemma that administrators face when their own moral beliefs do not match either organizational policies or directives. He reported that administrators describe this as a "gray area," in which they struggle internally to make decisions. Educational leaders must overcome this "gray area" and other barriers to implement restorative practices successfully.

Perceived Barriers to Implementation

Numerous barriers have been written about regarding the difficulty of implementing restorative practices: no single definitive model or manual, variation among practitioners, time and money to implement, and the philosophical change required to change discipline practices (Schiff, 2018; Song & Swearer, 2016).

For quite some time, there was no one manual or source on implementing restorative justice or on which practices are specifically required. Practitioners disagreed on the level of specificity required in training, while purists frequently believed that restorative justice is the existential truth of how we should live and, therefore, there can be no one manual that can properly capture its essence (Song & Swearer, 2016; Zehr, 2015). Since 2010, the Safer Saner School Whole School Implementation guide from the International Institute of Restorative Practices has provided a single manual to fulfill this need (IIRP, 2010). Even in their book, *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools Teaching Responsibility: Creating Caring Communities,* Amstatz and Mullet (2015) described multiple ways to implement restorative practices into a school system, noting there are various workable possibilities: whole-school models, reintegration following suspensions, and truancy mediation. This observation only reinforces the complaint that no consistent implementation strategy exists. Consequently, implementation of restorative practices can vary widely from classroom to classroom, school to school, and district to district (Buckmaster, 2016; Erb & Erb, 2018; Gonzalaz et al., 2019; Payne & Welch, 2018; Schiff, 2018). In the school setting, district-wide change takes extensive effort to transform mindsets from a punitive "you deal with him" mentality to a restorative "how can we make this right?" process (Wachtel, 2003).

Completely changing from a punitive discipline model to a restorative model is involved. Researchers identified a significant limitation or qualifier of restorative justice: students must choose to participate in restorative conferences and circles (Gregory et al., 2018; Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014; Umbreit et al., 2015). The voluntary nature of the restorative process is essential (Gregory et al., 2018). A conference cannot occur if the student does not wish to utilize it (Umbreit et al., 2015; Kelly & Thorsborne, 2014). This fact makes switching completely to a restorative model difficult. Wachtel (2003) identified a related barrier to participating in a restorative conference: people are fearful. The anticipation of strong emotions and the time required to deal with them can make those trained to facilitate restorative conferences resistant to fully carrying out such processes.

Another barrier to the use of restorative practices is the variation among practitioners. The sheer number of components implemented in a school is very debatable (Song & Swearer, 2016). The IIRP has the most complete list but this list does not even seem to be widely known. The sheer number of variations of restorative approaches has made empirical research difficult (Norris, 2019). As a result, anecdotal evidence has become standard (Payne & Welch, 2018).

As mentioned earlier, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) and restorative practices both fall under the umbrella of the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS). While the two can occur simultaneously, the overlap of the two blurs the identifiable restorative justice components (Schiff, 2018). Sandwick et al. (2019), Erb and Erb (2018), Fine (2018), Gregory et al. (2018), Kehoe et al. (2018), and Weaver and Swank (2020) have utilized interviews, case studies, and surveys, but few studies maintain large quantitative data

samples (Gregory et al., 2018; Norris, 2019; Payne & Welch, 2018). Restorative practices are therefore challenging to prove beneficial (Norris, 2019).

Another major complaint is the amount of time required for restorative practices compared to traditional discipline models (Song & Swearer, 2016). This barrier is two-fold because of the time needed to execute restorative practices and the time needed to prepare the school staff to implement the changes. Amstatz and Mullet (2015) described a process in which staff training is followed by additional learning communities to provide ongoing support. This process does not account for the mental paradigm shift required to establish a restorative mentality and thoroughly understand restorative justice (Anfara et al., 2013; Weaver & Swank, 2020). Schiff (2018) observed that restorative practices oppose the predominant and accepted retributive culture in which political leaders emphasize "tough on crime" stances and condemn offenders. Thus, it takes time to change these prevailing values. Implementation of school-wide restorative practices can take between three and five years (Blood and Thorsborne, 2005).

Finally, as an extension of the time barrier, financial resources are necessary to sustain support (Norris, 2019). In addition to costs involved in the initial training and implementation of restorative practices, ongoing support will be necessary as staff move in and out of a building or district and as the practices evolve.

Summary

Essentially, continued data indicating inequity in discipline over the last fifty years has led school leaders as well as the Department of Education to pursue alternatives to retributive discipline. Restorative justice has the potential to provide alternatives to suspension and

expulsion. Instead of pushing students out-of-schools, restorative practices aim to maintain and support relationships in the school community.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices created 11 Essential Elements that help those attempting to implement restorative practices understand and strategize the use of such practices. The fundamental hypothesis that high support and high control allow students to flourish helps guide educators' interactions. Shifting interactions with students from the *not*, *for*, and *to* categories to the *with* restorative quadrant of Wachtel's Window is accomplished through specific strategies.

Based on the skills Equity Leaders and Culturally Responsive School Leaders propose, school administrators wishing to address biases and inequities will need to recognize, respond, and address inequities. The local culture and community must be considered as responses are crafted. Once the inequities have been addressed, school leaders will need to work to sustain the changes to avoid reverting to old methods and procedures.

Barriers have prevented more use of restorative practices. The avoidance of one definitive definition or manual for restorative practices has prevented consistent use across the United States. This has led to many pockets of use and variation in the use of restorative practices. Another challenge is the time required to train staff and to utilize the strategies. Despite these barriers, educational leaders who implement restorative practices are hopeful that the effects of differential processing will be diminished, and suspensions will be used rarely and only for the most severe infractions.

Chapter 3

Qualitative Research Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the necessary strategies, beliefs, and actions leaders have taken to incorporate school-wide restorative practices in a school. The barriers perceived and actualized are helpful to discover in order to plan how to surmount them. This study examined one specific district in a comparative case study in which the central administration of a public school district made moves toward restorative justice.

Research Questions

1. How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence the implementation of restorative practices?
2. What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?
3. What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when considering school-wide restorative practices?

Research Design

To gain an understanding of restorative justice practices in a midwestern state, a case study was utilized. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined case study research as a "qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information" (p. 96). According to Mills and Gay (2016), case study research is appropriate when the researcher attempts to determine to what extent a program or application has been implemented. Moreover, the boundary or specific definition of the case is the defining characteristic of a case study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For this comparative case study, I examined the overall beliefs, processes, and practices two high schools in one district have chosen to utilize, along with the perceived barriers and the challenges they have encountered. Although restorative practices can be used in any educational setting, this study focused on the high school level.

A case study is an advantageous research method for studying restorative practice implementation within an education setting. School contexts vary widely, as does leadership philosophy and execution. The implementation of restorative practices in schools requires time, effort, and intentionality; therefore, an in-depth examination of the leadership strategies, actions, and problems encountered in the incorporation of restorative practices is appropriate. Qualitative data was collected through documents and interviews from one school district currently implementing restorative practices in a midwestern state.

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that the case study researcher works to collect data on the present to see the most relevant, current picture of the research being investigated. Restorative justice has been increasingly utilized as an alternative to punitive discipline models over the last twenty years (Gonzalez et al., 2019; Hirschfield, 2018; Payne & Welch, 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019; Weaver & Swank, 2020), yet the transition among whole school systems has been slow. Determining the current barriers, leadership strategies, beliefs, and actions through the case analysis will enable other practitioners to better understand what actions are required to implement restorative practices. For those not yet implementing restorative practices in their setting, this study will uncover some initial experiences with restorative strategies.

The Case

The midwestern state in which the study takes place is sparsely populated, fairly conservative state. There are numerous Native American reservations in the state, with many schools on and off the reservations catering to primarily white and native students. The inequities in discipline assignments have been documented, and many schools have revised their school board policies to be less punitive.

The high schools in this study are in the second largest school district in a midwestern state. The district has over 40 administrators who are defined as school principals, assistant principals, district superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other district leaders. Most of these school leaders are experienced, with only five having fewer than three years of experience across the district.

Nearly 14,000 students attend school in the school district. High School A has just under 2,000 students, one principal, and three assistants with a dean. High School B has 300 students, one principal, and one assistant principal.

According to the state's Department of Education, most students are white in the school district; however, just under 20% are Native American. Approximately 80% of students have graduated on time over the last three years. This rate is below the state average of 84%. Eighty-eight percent graduated or received their high school diploma before turning 21 in the 2018-2019 school year. This rate is below the state average of 93%.

The district undertook a strategic plan five years ago. Restorative practices were not a part of this strategic plan, but such practices were added in under the Whole Child Initiative four years ago. The Whole Child Initiative has four main components: cultural proficiency, suicide prevention and awareness, trauma informed practices, and restorative practices.

Professional development occurred in two areas. All staff (including bus drivers, custodians, and cafeteria workers) underwent suicide prevention training and all certified staff and administrators participated in a book study on trauma informed practices followed by an interactive online program (nearly 10 hours). Some buildings participated in cultural awareness professional development and most staff were exposed to the concept of restorative practices in the trauma modules. The Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings have been utilized to further cultural proficiency, particularly at the elementary level. Three years ago, a small committee of administrators and managers of student safety was brought together by the assistant superintendent to revise the discipline matrix to include more restorative practices.

Researcher's Background

As the primary researcher on this project, I have firsthand knowledge of the midwestern state as well as of public education. I have lived in the state for most of my life and have taught in the public school system for 15 years. "Oblivious" or "naive" may be words to describe me as a middle-class, white woman early in my career. I had no idea of the extent of the disparities in discipline assignments that were based on race and gender. In the last ten years, however, I have become cognizant of the inequities that exist in my town and the school system. It is now incredibly apparent that schools must play a role in mitigating bias, racism, and the inequities associated with them.

Upon recognizing changes needed to occur, I sought training. After attending a two-day workshop conducted for the public on a victim-offender conference (VOC) through the local District Attorney's Office, I became a facilitator for formal VOC conferences through their Juvenile Diversion Program, and I subsequently participated in

a handful of formal conferences with offenders and their victims. One case in which I was involved revolved around a freshman at a large local high school. The student had vandalized a local business's property, and the business was willing to participate in the conference. The formal procedure was established and supported by the District Attorney's Office. The conference went well, with the young man's mother and the local businessperson fully participating. The emotional power of the conference was striking and, although initially a negative incident for the adolescent, may have been the best incident to turn his grades and, ultimately, his life around. Although this is the most formal end of the Continuum of Practice, described in Chapter 2, it epitomized the philosophy of restorative justice.

Another major catalyst that caused me to pursue greater understanding in my community was a presentation about the Indian Boarding School that existed in my town. The presentation from a local community group opened my eyes to inequities that I had felt in my hometown for numerous years. In short, the presentation detailed numerous wrongs committed against the Native American population of my hometown over the last hundred years that resulted in stolen land.

Data Collection

Yin (2018) noted six primary sources of data for case study research: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations, and physical artifacts. Each has strengths and weaknesses, as noted below. This study had three primary sources of evidence: archival data, document analysis, and interviews with practitioners. Data was collected over three months in the spring and summer of 2021. The archival data was

retrieved from the OCR database and public information from the school district's website while interviews occurred with active practitioners.

Document Analysis

Documentation serves to verify and corroborate interviews and other sources of information (Yin, 2018). Any handouts, discipline matrixes, information for parents, or teachers' procedures were requested and collected. The documents were compared to the IIRP's 11 Essential Elements for Restorative Practices and categorized based on the Essential Elements.

Board policy concerning student discipline was analyzed for the last revision date and any mention of restorative practices. In board policy organization, Section J pertains to students. In the school district analyzed for this study, board policies beginning with JF and JG relate to student conduct and potential consequences.

Using e-mail, the researcher requested information regarding staff training and the type of staff (positions) who attended. District presentations from the Student Services Department to the Board of Education regarding discipline from three Board of Education meetings were analyzed to understand mindset and trends in data. The presentations had data documents embedded and attached on the Board of Education website. These documents were added to those received from study participants. These documents helped enable the researcher to determine the source of restorative practices. All communication was written in a research log.

Interviews

Next, the researcher scheduled and participated in one-on-one interviews with the Student Success Coordinator, the principals from each high school, as well as their assistants

or deans. The selection of possible interviewees for this study utilized purposeful sampling. Cases were narrowed to the most comparable high schools and administrators were asked to participate via e-mail. Follow-up calls were made to those that did not respond within one week. When the appointment was made, each interviewee received a copy of the interview questions. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research project by changing all proper nouns. A pseudonym will be used to identify each participant and school in the final report.

The semi-structured interviews occurred via Zoom. All interviews were video recorded, and voice recorded using the Otter Application with Zoom for backup. The recording was transcribed and kept for the length of the project, but not shared. See Appendix A for the list of initial questions. Each interview ranged from 35 minutes to 65 minutes.

Interview Participants. The Student Support Manager was invited to participate to give an umbrella or district view. Interviews were conducted with the Student Support Coordinator, four assistant principals, three from Rosewood High School, a pseudonym, and one from Sage Tech High, also a pseudonym, were completed. There is a mixture of women and men. Before beginning the interview process, questions were scrutinized by four educators, and a mock interview was conducted with one administrator in the school district.

Archival Records

Archival records added historical context to the case. Yin (2018) commented that archival records, like documentation, are useful because they are fixed, can be repeatedly analyzed, and do not intrude into the daily workings of those being studied. Archival records are not created for the study and, therefore, are unbiased, yet they could be subject to

selection bias. Yin (2018) remarked that they can be challenging to obtain due to privacy, however, that was not problematic in this case looking at implementation rather than effectiveness.

In studying restorative practices, it is useful to examine historical discipline practices. Because this is frequently a catalyst for implementing restorative practices, it is important data to consider. This historical data will add to the case, even though OCR data is only reported every two to three years. The raw data displayed totals for each group and subgroup in a variety of categories. Percentages of ISS and OSS were computed by dividing the number of in-school suspensions or out-of-school suspensions assigned by the total school population and repeated by subgroup.

Yin (2018) cautioned researchers to avoid answering different research questions through different sources of evidence. He instead suggested ensuring that the research design is such that the different sources of evidence collaborate findings. The suspension data, along with district documents serves to collaborate the information from the interviews.

Data Analysis

Yin (2018) advised a starting point to analyze case study data is to "play" with your data, looking for commonalities, themes, or patterns. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), case study analysis is not linear but a process of looping to revisit prior analysis. The first of these loops involves keeping organized files and managing the collected data. All documents were printed and paired with an analysis. The analysis form, Appendix B, enabled flagging of category, date, author, and a short notes section. Within this first loop, the Zoom interview was transcribed. Each transcription was organized based on the initial questions asked (See Appendix B.). Next, in round two of evaluation, I examined the text, highlighting key

sentences and named themes. During the second loop, I read and re-read transcriptions of the interviewees to record emergent ideas in shorthand, utilizing a codebook (See Figure 4.). This second loop also created an audit trail in which I could re-trace thoughts, thus providing increased validity while allowing the synthesis of questions and common emerging themes. The third loop involved classifying or naming codes or categories (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Specific quotations supporting each theme definition were located, helping the researcher refine each definition and preponderance of themes. This coding serves a similar function that Yin (2018) called pattern matching. At this point, the researcher enlisted help from fellow educators to validate codes and create a codebook. The codebook established descriptions of each code and allows for identifiable characteristics of each code.

Next in the data analysis spiral, Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended developing and assessing interpretations. In this step, the researcher utilized the codes and themes to analyze the data (See Figure 4.).

Figure 4.

Example of Codebook Entry for Themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 192)

Theme	Code Name	Definition	When to use	When not to use	Example of a segment of text
Time	Lack of time	Any evidence in which extended time was mentioned or documented	When considering teacher or administrator actions surrounding restorative practices	When encountering daily business or routine teaching duties	"The conference took an hour after school."
	Time saving	Any evidence in which initial input of time saves time later in the year	When teachers are reflecting on previous uses of restorative practices	When referring to efficiency in processes – computer entry or scheduling	"The relationship we built early on enabled Charlie to understand he could talk to me."

Diagramming the themes, using peer debriefing, and working toward the final loop in the spiral, representing and visualizing the data, enabled such synthesis. These final steps in the data analysis spiral overlap and lend themselves to better processing and understanding of qualitative data.

In all, the loops described above gave structure to the analysis of data. The scrutinizing of each interview to ensure information was correctly interpreted was facilitated by creating the codebook and re-analyzing it. This allowed the researcher to interact with the data on multiple levels, considering it a format that allows for deeper understanding.

Trustworthiness

Validity is one of the most important aspects of a research study; however, because this is a qualitative study, the concept and term “trustworthiness” will be utilized as a more accurate substitute for validity. Shenton (2004) identified four aspects of validity: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The research plan has been detailed to leave the reader with few or no questions concerning the design. Considering the context details will also enable readers to relate and form a mental picture of the particular case.

Above all, the credibility of the research must be ensured. The researcher must utilize research practices that will garnish accurate findings. In this study, credibility shall be ensured by utilizing three strategies recommended by Shenton (2004): peer debriefing, member checks, and triangulation. Initially, categorization and alignment of interview questions to research questions occurred. This categorization ensured that the intended questions were asked. Interview questions were peer-reviewed and tested on a subject, who is not included in the study, to determine question strength. The test subject’s analysis and suggestions increased the quality of each question. Once questions were established, the interviews took place. Throughout the interview, member checks were done to determine if the researcher was reporting what each interviewee had said correctly. Questions such as "Do I understand you correctly when I say...?" were asked. Hendricks (2017) noted that such member checks ensure accuracy and reduce bias. Upon completing the interview processes, the data gleaned from them was compared with other interviews, handouts, and other information sources to corroborate what was said. Triangulating the different sources ensured the researcher was recording an accurate picture of the case.

The ability to utilize the results of the study is based heavily on transferability. If readers can grasp the context, type of people who contributed to the data, data collection methods, and timeframe, they will be more easily able to replicate the study and utilize the results. This transferability blends into dependability. Shelton (2004) noted that if enough details are provided, another researcher could repeat the same study and generate similar results.

Lastly, trustworthiness is supported by confirmability. Admitting the researcher's predispositions and creating an audit trail supports confirmability. For this study, the researcher's predisposition is to support the idea of restorative justice and restorative practices in a school setting. Restoration of relationships and belonging seem to exist in the world that she wants to exist. It appears leaders with a focus on equity would be drawn to them. Yet, it will be the researcher’s intention and action to avoid conveying that idea to the interviewees. Finally, validation is an attempt to ensure that the findings are accurate and that the participants’ meaning in their words was accurately transcribed and understood by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By providing able details and depth, the trustworthiness of the research methods and researcher is developed, giving the study greater validity.

Limitations and Assumptions of Designs

The research described in this section is qualitative and can only detail the specific case presented. Themes will emerge that readers may take back to their context and setting, but there is no correlation or causation. Generalizations cannot be generated due to the nature of a case study.

Limitations

Specific limitations in this study do exist. Important variables amongst participants were the administrator's experience, the vision, and mission for student discipline, and the administrator's past life experience. It is noteworthy that both head principals have been in their roles for five years or more.

The pandemic overshadowed many leaders' abilities to ask their teachers and staff to do anything more than plan, respond to school closures, and try to support one another in a virtual teaching environment. This means COVID-19 halted most training efforts. It also was a bizarre year in that many students did not attend in-person learning. Many elected to do distance learning throughout the fall of 2020. Although most returned by March, the behavior data reported lower incident numbers.

Assumptions

Developing rapport and trust with the study participants is critical to the information they disclose (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 156). The researcher documented all conversations in the research log leading up to the interviews and the interviews themselves were transcribed. The pre-conversations planning the formal interview served to establish rapport and a relationship before the official interviews.

Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) has been implemented throughout the school district and state. State PBIS mentors have been working with school districts and schools concerning training, professional development, and fidelity of implementation. School leaders will rely on their knowledge and experience of PBIS as their first go-to tool when student behaviors emerge. Building leaders utilizing PBIS, however, may default to punitive consequences when the PBIS strategies do not fit the antecedent.

Ethical Considerations

Inherent to all studies are limitations and assumptions by the researcher that could turn into ethical dilemmas or issues. Ethical issues do not just emerge at the data collection phase (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, accuracy throughout is of the highest importance.

Creswell & Poth (2018) identified four typical ethical issues to avoid: avoid falsifying evidence and conclusions, avoid disclosing identifiable or sensitive information from participants, avoid poor communication, and avoid plagiarism. For this study, the only issue that requires special consideration is the second listed, identifiable information. The state in which the project is situated is small and, at times, only a close description will be required to recognize individuals or places. Thus, pseudonyms and intentional lack of specificity will be used when describing specific sites.

Individual stories may be relayed to the researcher throughout the project. These stories will not be explicitly listed in the case study, and individuals' names will not be shared.

Summary

Qualitative research methods are best suited to summarize the types of change leaders make to implement restorative practices. A case study is useful because data can be collected through archival data, documents, records, and interviews, all corroborating the permeation of restorative practices in a school. One school district is the unit of study, allowing the researcher to see how the same district guidance appears in two high schools. The interview process, archival data, and artifacts will allow for the establishment of themes.

Chapter 4

Results

Introduction

Chapter 4 describes two schools in which restorative practices have been utilized as a component of their discipline matrix. First, a narrative description of the school district with the case under study is described, along with historical data and district documents. Second, the two high schools utilizing restorative practices, Rosewood High School and Sage Tech High, are described, followed by each school's demographic data. Third, the themes discovered in the interview process are explained. Although both schools are utilizing restorative practices, use has not yet fully permeated their system. Finally, the chapter culminates with a cross-case analysis. The similarities and differences in the themes that emerged throughout interviews, accompanying documents, and archival data are submitted for comparison. This is to better understand the perceptions, actions, and barriers faced by current school leaders.

The Case Context

School District 22 Demographic Information

School District 22, a pseudonym, is a large school district in a rural state with large agriculture industry. The town in which School District 22 is located, is the second largest city in the state. Twenty-three total schools reside in the district, consisting of two comprehensive high schools, an alternative high school, and 20 middle or elementary schools. The school district’s largest subgroup is listed as Native American at 17.64 % of the total population (State Department of Education, 2021). No charter or magnet schools are allowed within the state as of 2021.

The current superintendent began five years ago. In her first year, she held "listening sessions" in which she visited each school and heard from teachers, support staff, and parents. The following year, the district launched a five-year strategic plan with five goals: Reading by Third Grade; College, Career, and Life Readiness; 21st Century Learning; Teaching and Learning; and School and Community Partnerships. A year into the plan, the Whole Child Initiative was introduced in addition to the strategic plan. The Whole Child Initiative aims to increase cultural competencies, institute more trauma-informed practices, reduce suicide, and enable staff to use a wider variety of restorative practices in their classrooms. To increase cultural competencies, the Oceti Sakowin Essential Understandings have been incorporated across the district. The understandings are based on Lakota culture, which is the most prominent local Native American tribe. To support the whole child aspect of the strategic plan, the discipline matrix was revised by a committee of high school administrators, the assistant superintendent, and other district leaders in the 2019-2020 school year. The Board of Education receives updates on all aspects of the strategic plan during normally scheduled board meetings.

For many years, the school district has conducted data meetings at each school to analyze building and district academic, attendance, and behavioral data. The leadership team, including building administrators and select teachers, attend. These gatherings meet state requirements for planning and examine statistics to determine areas in which students are and are not achieving equitably. Attendees at these meetings analyze state academic test results, behavior and discipline data, and attendance data to create goals and make plans for the following year.

Office of Assistant Superintendent

The Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services is responsible for registering students, providing oversight and leadership for building administration, and offering guidance and direction for student conduct and discipline. Four staff members work in the assistant superintendent's office: two assistants, the student success coordinator, and a student support manager. The student support manager is a position that compiles data from schools on student behavior, organizes and leads work on Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), and manages large student discipline events.

The student support manager handles student discipline data and incidents more than anyone else in the school district. The perspective of this person gives an overarching view of the entire school district on discipline and the school personnel's response to incidents. *Luke* currently holds the position. He has been in the office for the past five years but in education for nearly 20 years. He identifies as White.

Rosewood High School

Rosewood High School, a pseudonym for the school's actual name, is a large high school in School District 22. The school has nearly 2,000 students in attendance. Eighty-seven percent of high school students received their diploma in the 2019-2020 school year, while on-time graduation was at 74%. Rosewood High has a head principal, three vice-principals, and one dean of students. Table 1 displays data from the state's Department of Education website, separating data by race as the website does.

The school utilizes a block schedule, having "red" and "white" days, which allows students to attend half of their courses on one day and the other half the following day. It is a large high school, but the administration has intentionally created a "Freshman House" to

utilize the school-within-a-school concept. This concept places first-time freshmen with their peers for all core classes (math, science, social studies, and English) and then they move into the larger building for elective courses.

Table 1

Rosewood demographic data are taken from the State Department of Education website

Rosewood High School	Population	ISS	Graduation Rates	
			On-Time	High School Completion
Total Enrollment (2019-2020)	1,953	10%	74%	87%
American Indian or Alaska Native	19.8%	35.4%	50%	68%
Asian	0.82%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Black or African American	1.23%	3.5%	n/a	n/a
Hispanic or Latino	7.5%	8.6%	54%	59%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.05%	1%	n/a	n/a
Two or More Races	9.3%	9.1%	75%	89%
White	61.2%	42.4%	81%	93%
Students with Disabilities	12.1 %	24.4%	56%	64%
Economically Disadvantaged	15.5%	n/a	49%	90%
Staffing				
Total Teachers (FTE)		102.9		
Total Counselors (FTE)		5		
Student to Teacher Ratio		18.26: 1		

For this study, the head principal and the assistant principals were interviewed. *Clint* has been a head principal for 20 years but in education for 25 years. He is Native American and has been at Rosewood for 16 years. *Amelia* has been in education for 33 years, teaching or administrating in the current school district for 20 years. She has been in the assistant principal role for the last 15 years. For the last two years, she has been the head of the Freshman House. She has been at Rosewood High School the longest of the three assistant principals. *Bryce* has been at Rosewood off and on for 26 years and in administration there

for 14. Of the three assistant principals, he is the only one who identifies as a minority, being of Hispanic descent, while the other two assistant principals identify as White or Caucasian. Lastly, the newest member of the administration, *Vern,* has been in education for seven years, and this is his first year as an assistant principal at Rosewood High. Last year, he was a dean of students at the same school, previously teaching in a community nearby.

Sage Tech High

Sage Tech High, also a pseudonym, is an alternative high school. Students must apply to enter and capacity is limited. Sage Tech does have a special education program but does not cater to higher-need special education students such as those with significant developmental impairments or physical needs. Table 2 displays demographic data from the state's Department of Education website.

Functioning as an alternative school, Sage Tech has different structures in place to support students. Over the last five years, the school has been moving toward personalized learning, utilizing computers and online courses to allow students to move through courses at their own pace. This has enabled the school to change its bell schedule, allowing students to self-schedule their day. Self-scheduling authorizes students to spend more time in courses they need assistance in and less in those they are passing. Furthermore, it has enabled students to schedule courses with friends and avoid students with which they have conflicts. Additionally, leaders at the school have designed an advisory period. The school leadership team has established lessons for the advisory time, and students meet with their advisor daily to plan their schedule, ask questions, and discuss school matters. The students will remain with their advisors for all four years of their high school journey.

Table 2

Sage Tech Demographic Data are taken from the State Department of Education website

Sage Tech High (2019-2020)	Population	ISS	Graduation Rates	
			On-Time	High School Completion
Total Enrollment	324	39%	37%	64%
American Indian or Alaska Native	32.1%	38.5%	35%	60%
Asian	0.3%	0%	n/a	n/a
Black or African American	2.8%	2.4%	n/a	n/a
Hispanic or Latino	7.7%	5.5%	n/a	n/a
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%	0%	n/a	n/a
Two or More Races	11.4%	7.9%	n/a	n/a
White	45.7%	45.7%	44%	67%
Students with Disabilities	16.4%	11.8%	62%	n/a
Economically Disadvantaged	50.9%	n/a	38%	67%
Staffing				
Total Teachers (FTE)		31.8		
Total Counselors (FTE)		1		
Student to Teacher Ratio		12.3:1		

The head principal, *Truman*, has been at the school for five years but in education for 15 years. He identifies as White. *Pearl* serves as the only assistant principal. She is in her 23rd year in education, the last five at Sage Tech High. She was nationally board certified as a teacher and has been an administrator for five years. She identifies as Caucasian.

Archival Data

Rosewood High School averages 14% of students receiving at least one in-school suspension from 2009-2017, while Sage Tech High averages nearly 35% in the years available for analysis from 2013-2017.

The in-school suspension data from the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) does not describe incidents, only consequences. The out-of-school suspension data is also based strictly on the

Table 3
ISS Data are taken from the Office of Civil Rights

School	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009
Rosewood High School	11%	9%	20%	20%	10%
Sage Tech (Alternative) High	34%	41%	30%		

number of students with one or more suspensions out-of-school. The data shown in Table 3 shows that Sage Tech High is suspending anywhere from double to quadruple the number of students, both in school and out-of-school, compared to Rosewood High School.

Table 4 displays a similar comparison of out-of-school suspension from both schools.

Table 4
OSS Data are taken from the Office of Civil Rights

School	2017	2015	2013	2011	2009
Rosewood High School	9%	7%	7%	10%	4.4%
Sage Tech (Alternative) High	21%	30%	17%		

Document Analysis

A variety of archival records are available on the district's website, the state's Department of Education website, and the Office of Civil Rights website (OCR). The school district's website provides information on board policy, recordings, agendas, minutes of school board meetings, the strategic plan, and associated documents. The state's Department of Education website houses district and school report cards presenting data on attendance, graduation results, demographics, behavior, test results, and school safety. Finally, the Office of Civil Rights collects data on a wide range of school demographics and statistics ranging

from the number of English language learners to how many students take geometry to special education rates. This study utilized data on discipline for students with and without disability from the OCR.

School District 22 Board Policy

The school district's Board Policy JFC outlines student conduct and offenses for which students can be suspended. Suspensions can be assigned for numerous offenses, some of which include drug use and possession, cheating, vandalism, insubordination, truancy, possession of weapons, assault, harassment or discrimination, agitation of a conflict (rumor spreading), disruptive behavior, habitual disobedience, and inappropriate and disruptive behavior. Policy JFC has existed since 1982 and was last updated in 2000.

Revised District Discipline Matrix

During the 2018-2019 school year, a committee of administrators, law enforcement personnel, and community support personnel (social workers and juvenile service professionals) was formed to revise the discipline matrix. According to an executive summary written for the Board of Education by the committee in December 2019, “One of the major goals of the new discipline matrices was to reduce student suspensions, which include in-school suspensions (ISS), out-of-school suspensions (OSS), long-term suspensions (LTS), and expulsions.” Additionally, they noted, “A key driver of the revised discipline matrices has been to reduce the disproportionate number of Native American students suspended from our schools” (District 22, 2019). The main difference between the old matrix and the new matrix was a Restorative Practice Menu or a list of restorative options for administrators to utilize.

The Revised (new) High School Discipline Matrix is 21 pages in length and is a guide for an administrator that describes definitions, offenses, and possible consequences. The matrix (See Appendix D) lays out the offense on the left-most column of a multi-page table indicating whether it is the first, second, third, or fourth or more offense. As the number of offenses increases, the severity of the consequence increases. For example, minor vandalism would have the administrator refer to the Restorative Practices Menu for the first offense and then indicate either detention or ISS for one day. As the number of offenses increases, the number of days in ISS or OSS increases until a long-term suspension is deemed appropriate, denoted by the Packet for Administrative Action with Suspension of 45 days (PFAA).

The Restorative Practices Menu, Table 5 and seen in full in Appendix C, is divided into three categories: referrals, making right, and more formal consequences. Referrals are the first option for administrators. If the behavior or incident requires more assistance than the school can provide, the administrator can refer the student to a counselor, health professional, or other outside agency. Next, the administrator could provide an option to "Make Right" or repair the harm done in an incident.

Table 5

Restorative Practice Menu from District 22 Discipline Matrix

Formal Consequences	"Make Right" Actions	Referrals
Record Warning	Make Amends	Referral to Counselor
Apology	Make Up Time	Refer to Health Professional
Student Conference	Redo Assignment for Credit	Refer to Outside Agency
Parent Contact	Reflection Form	
Parent Conference	Conflict Resolution	
Parent/Student Conference	Success Plan	
Student Contact	Plan of Action	
	Community Service	
	Restitution	
	Restorative Conference (w/victim's permission)	

Lastly, the most severe of the three categories are formal consequences. Formal consequences options consist of a recorded warning, apology, student conference, parent contact, parent conference, student/parent conference, or student conference. The Restorative Practices Menu is used as a reference for administrators.

The Restorative Practice Menu also contains directions for administrators to use their judgment or discretion according to the "circumstances of the incident, whether it is a first, second or third offense, and ensure that they are developmentally and culturally responsive," according to the document (District 22, 2020). In a presentation to the Board of Education in the fall of 2019, recorded and archived on the district's webpage, the assistant superintendent said the following:

> What we did in the old discipline matrix was one where you didn't have the choice as a disciplinarian, and so if I'm the assistant principal at [Rosewood High School] and a student comes down [to the office], and they've been in a fight or a disagreement, I have to do certain things with them. The past matrix was that they [participants in the fight] are both out for five days. Don't ask any questions.

The new restorative menu allows administrators greater discretion in the assignment of consequences. For example, an administrator could assign an apology rather than detention or a restorative conference rather than detention or ISS.

Reports to the Board of Education

In the winter of 2020, summer of 2020, and winter of 2021, the Student Support Office under the assistant superintendent presented behavior data to the Board of Education. Each presentation is available on the district's webpage in the library of past Board of

Education meetings. At each presentation, the assistant superintendent and the student support manager presented a PowerPoint containing charts, tables, and information on student behavior across all grades, detailing behavioral incidents by grade band, race, and location. The presentation included raw numbers as well as comparisons to the previous school year. In June of 2020, the team reported that restorative practices were increasing in their use. Data from the district database listed restorative conferences, referrals to a counselor, and apologies as most used practices.

Other District Documents

Long-Term Suspension Guide. The school district has a one-page procedure guide for long-term suspensions. The document is a procedural guide to formal paperwork requirements, meetings with families, and talking about the guidelines and rules for suspended students who are out of the general education classroom for long periods. It provides a timeline based on the number of weeks the student is in the long-term suspension classroom and includes team meeting participants, communication expectations, and return procedures for the administration. According to the student support manager, the form was recently updated to be more restorative. The revised document will be used next year by administrators and focuses more on student strengths, looking ahead, and adult support (See Appendix E).

Restorative Welcome and Re-Entry Circle Guide. In addition to the long-term suspension procedure, the student support manager provided a new Restorative Welcome and Re-Entry Circle document. This document outlines ways a student who was out on a long-term suspension would re-enter the school setting. It is a preliminary document for a new practice that will go into use during the 2021-2022 school year. The document outlines

members, member roles, and a basic example of what a re-entry circle could look like (See Appendix F).

Although the long-term suspension documents and Restorative Welcome and Re-Entry Circle guide exist, interviews indicated neither high school has personalized them or created anything specific to their building. Sage Tech High has introduced the concept of a re-entry circle to their Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) committee. However, *Pearl* reported that the feedback from the teachers on the committee was reluctance due to a fear that they might promise students support they could not provide.

Training

Beyond having access to the documents, all principals participated in a study of a book called *Hacking School Discipline* by Nathan Maynard and Brady Weinstein (2019). The book study was led by the assistant superintendent during the 2019-2020 school year. Due to COVID-19, the book study ended in March without closure.

Of the six administrators interviewed, four (two at Rosewood High School and both from Sage Tech High) also attended a 3-day training at the state attorney's office on Victim Offender Conferences (VOC) by their own choice. The training taught attendees how to conduct the most formal practice of the International Institute of Restorative Practices' 11 Essential Elements (2010), the Victim Offender Conference. Of the school-wide, broad-based, and targeted elements, the VOC is the most targeted element. This conference requires pre-meetings with all affected parties, followed by an intensive conference with all people involved in the incident along with additional family or friends for moral support.

In addition, all administrators engaged in the Educational Impact's trauma training with all staff working through ten online modules, which included participating in readings,

discussions, and watching videos. One of the ten modules was devoted solely to restorative practices. Another resource most interviewees mentioned was an all-staff required training to watch four hours of professional development videos designed and presented by Rick Lavoie. The training, entitled “Managing Challenging Behaviors,” was in response to an Office of Civil Rights complaint received in the district's Special Education Department and mandated for general staff through the school district's director of special education. This training did not directly name restorative practices, but administrators recognized the relevant aspects and referred to them when asked about training on restorative practices. The two pieces of training specific to restorative practices, the *Hacking School Discipline* book study and the VOC training, were exclusive to administrators, while the Educational Impact training and the “Managing Challenging Behaviors” training was for all certified staff.

Interview Themes

Throughout the six interviews with the assistant principals, principals, and the student support manager, specific themes became evident. Two themes were strikingly different between the two schools: in-school suspension use and the administrators’ views of consequences when applying restorative practices. Many themes, however, were very similar, including teaching mentality, misunderstanding of restorative practices, willingness to use restorative practices, time, Culturally Responsive School Leadership, and the effect of COVID-19. These themes have been coded and the main themes named are described below. Direct quotations from participants are categorized by the three research questions and coded in Appendices G, H, and I. Upon conclusion of the theme analysis of the interviews, a cross-case synthesis will examine restorative practices using all three sources of evidence. Although both schools are following the school district’s guidance regarding restorative

practices, it was clear through the interviews that the way that administrators understand in-school suspension and consequences is different.

In-School Suspension

One big difference between Rosewood High School and Sage Tech High was how they utilized their in-school suspension room. Rosewood High School has eliminated their in-school suspension room, replacing it with a "Cool Down Room" and a "Re-Zone Room." The "Cool Down Room" is managed and facilitated by the counselors and interventionists. It is meant to allow students a chance to regroup before discussing any incidents with the administration. The "Cool Down Room" is in the main portion of the building, serving 10th - 12th graders. The "Re-Zone Room" is in the freshman wing and is designed to focus on academics and behavior. It serves as a resource room for students to obtain help with homework, scheduling, and academics or as a place they can visit for behavior support. *Amelia* emphasized that anyone who is utilizing it as a suspension room is "just visiting." The focus in the room is primarily academic support.

All four Rosewood administrators discussed the relational aspect of the change. Because there is no formal ISS room, anyone requiring the consequence of in-school suspension in the main building must spend the day at a desk outside the administrator's office. This requires the student to check in frequently with the administrator and for the administrator to supervise the student throughout the day. *Vern* discussed the ownership he feels when a student is outside his office, commenting that it has frequently strengthened his relationship with the student. He described a benefit that students have with watching the administrator all day, making the person seem like a real person rather than just an authoritarian.

In contrast, *Pearl* at Sage Tech High commented that she might "overuse it [ISS]." She said that in-school suspension is more of a consequence than an out-of-school suspension. The ISS at Sage Tech is very traditional with a paraprofessional staffing the room all day. *Truman*, the head principal at Sage Tech, explained a situation like this:

> Okay, you've done something that's broken that trust; we're going to keep you close in one room for a while, you know, we're going to give you a more structured, monitored environment … "Hey, we gave you freedom. You violated it. Now you're going to lose freedom for a couple of days." You know, but for most kids, it's a really positive and beneficial ISS, or in-school suspension intervention, and [works] as a punishment.

Even though both schools are working from the same district guidelines, their application of in-school suspension is thus markedly different.

Consequences

Consequences emerged as a theme throughout all interviews. All administrators at Rosewood High School reported that consequences still occur even when utilizing restorative practices. Each administrator conveyed that teachers, parents, and school staff sometimes have a misconception that consequences do not occur when utilizing restorative practices or that staff believe that consequences should be different than they otherwise would have been. *Vern* admonished that "it doesn't always change the consequence," going on to say,

> Community members feel that because we're pushing restorative practices, sometimes [students'] consequences should be different. And that's not how this was set up to be. If you need to suspend a kid out for three days, it's how are we talking to the kid to get to that point? What are we going to do when they come back? What are we going

> to recommend to the family that's the restorative piece? The restorative justice training and book study that I did said you don't change the consequences; you change how you speak to the family and the kid and help them.

The administrators indicated that support for the student and referral for treatment are part of looking at the whole child. *Bryce* emphasized the "reasons behind the consequences" as important. Through conversation, the student can better understand the consequences and have a greater feeling of overall fairness about the event. All three assistant principals discussed how the dialogue leading up to the consequences impacts the direction the consequences go. If students are apologetic and have no prior offenses, the intervention does not need to be as severe.

Alternatively, *Pearl* at Sage Tech indicated that, when taking restorative action, the consequences can be different. Instead of a consequence still occurring, she more frequently will trade a punitive consequence for something from the restorative practice menu. She relayed a story in which a student had cursed at the school secretary. After she had the initial conversation with the student in the discipline incident, the student chose a restorative consequence instead of having detention, ISS, or something more typical. The student met with the secretary and assistant principal to apologize. At the end of the conference, when they began discussing what would fix the harm, the secretary suggested that the boy say "hello" to her each day.

Truman, the head principal at Sage Tech, expanded on this idea of alternative consequences, saying, "You know, they [those who do not understand restorative practices] just don't understand that, in good restorative practices, often the consequences are more costly to the kids than traditional school consequences." The social cost of publicly changing

behavior or apologizing can be more challenging than serving detention or other punitive consequences that are disassociated with the event. Although all administrators agree that consequences occur, Sage Tech's administrators indicated that, when using restorative practices, the consequences are different. Other than consequences and ISS usage, both schools had similar views on other aspects of restorative practices.

Teaching Mentality

A clear theme that emerged from the high schools was that administrators interpreted part of their role as "teaching students through conversation and consequences." Rather than just investigating the logistics of an event and assigning consequences, the administrator discusses possible alternative reactions/behaviors for the student in the future, thus teaching adolescents alternatives to their choices. Rosewood's *Bryce* shared his consideration: "Should that consequence be punitive because that will teach the lesson? Or will that consequence be more of a learning lesson for that student?" In this quadrant, the administrator can guide the students while still holding them accountable. *Amelia* from Rosewood High School commented,

> [A]t the high school level, you tend to think, well, they [the student] should know how to do this. They should, but they don't. It doesn't matter if they were taught it or not; it's something they have to develop, kind of like learning how to walk.

The conversation that accompanies the event is geared toward working to help students grow and learn through the event. *Luke*, the student support manager, identified the need for teaching when he said, "In those cases, to recognize the harm that they have actually done [is key] because some of our offenders don't really have the concept of what harm they truly have perpetrated." *Pearl* from Sage Tech mirrored the Rosewood administrator's comments,

noting, “I try looking at it as a teaching moment and realizing that sometimes what the adults in the building view as misbehavior is communication and a lack of understanding.” Through restorative practices, greater understanding for administrators, teachers, and the offenders is accomplished.

Considering the pushback from those who are opposed to restorative practices, *Clint*, the head principal at Rosewood, reflected on those who do not believe in restorative practices, stating, “They look at it as not teaching kids to be responsible. If you don't chastise them, whether it's behavior or grades, then they're not going to be responsible. It's teaching responsibility through negative consequences—that's the mentality.” He went on to state,

> Now as I was telling staff, those who want punitive [action] all the time, “These kids aren't going anywhere. We're not expelling them from school and they're going to be back. It doesn't matter how long we suspend them or how often we suspend them; they're coming back. So, wouldn't you rather than consistently be suspending them time after time after time, wouldn’t you rather put some work on the front end of it, trying to build a relationship? Teach this kid how to better cope with their behaviors?” Then they can be more productive.

Clint emphasized that removing a student from the school setting did not teach them to do better in the future.

Misunderstanding of Restorative Practices

Another theme that was consistently mentioned in all interviews was how other people misunderstand what restorative practices are. The student support manager for the school district commented that restorative justice is a “nebulous term” with many different interpretations. The administrators have grown to understand the most intensive component

of the 11 Essential Elements of restorative work, but those around them have not. Both *Luke* and *Vern* pointed out that "teachers should be instructing." Therefore, administrators should facilitate restorative conferences. This understanding creates a gap between what teachers know and believe about restorative practices and what the administrators know and understand. *Amelia* from Rosewood High School commented,

> One of the barriers is a misunderstanding of what restorative practices are. So many people [referring to teachers] feel like, oh, it's just a slap on the wrist. Or, "I sent them to the office, and they came back with a sucker." I think they have an inaccurate perception of what it is. They just don't realize that it's the consequence that still happens. It's how you approach the entire situation and what's following up afterward.

Amelia's comment drives toward the misunderstanding that administrators feel between their understanding and that of other staff members. *Luke* explained that the conversation might be restorative between the administrator and the student, but the teacher or other students may still not feel like the incident was resolved because they were not involved in the conversation process the offender and student engaged in.

The disconnect for staff members is likely due to a lack of intensive training. Restorative practices have been a focus for administration through leadership from the Whole Child Initiative, the assistant superintendent, and the district attorney's office. The previous assistant superintendent incorporated many district-wide pieces of training on trauma-informed practices that included snippets of restorative justice information. Most staff members, however, have not attended full training specifically focused on restorative practices. The feeling that there is a misunderstanding exists, but more training is not planned. According to the student support manager, the new assistant superintendent has

identified culture, data, and alignment as the focus for 2021-2022. *Luke* noted that behavior would not "fall off of the radar"; however, no formal path forward is indicated.

Willingness to Use Restorative Practices

One multifaceted theme that surfaced was "willingness." It is multifaceted because principals are willing, yet staff and students must also be willing for restorative practices to be effective.

All interviewed administrators were willing to utilize restorative practices. Three out of four of the active assistant principals had received training from the district attorney's office on Victim Offender Conferences (VOC). This multi-day, thorough training provided a strong philosophical understanding of the VOC. On the Continuum of Practice, this conference is the most formal.

Luke, the student support manager, talked about how challenging it was to implement anything social-emotional at the high school level, where teachers are very curriculum-driven. He said, "I think there are a lot more fixed mindsets within the realm of education than we like to really admit."

Beyond staff being willing to utilize restorative practices, students must be willing to take opportunities and ownership for their actions. Rosewood High School's administrators base their response to an incident on the student's reaction. "Does the student take accountability? Is the student willing to work with the adult, apologize, or participate in Lifeways [a drug and alcohol counseling program]?" asked *Bryce*. Similarly, *Vern* remarked, "It's really hard to allow a kid off [to substitute consequences] with an apology if he refuses to apologize." Sage Tech High's administrator also brought up the necessity of the offender or student who misbehaves to be a willing participant in a restorative solution. *Pearl*, the

most experienced practitioner, indicated that students have to be *ready* (emphasis added) to make things right, from her experience. If a student is not open to an alternative, administrators cannot force that student into an apology or any other alternative option. *Luke,* the student support manager, also commented on the challenge of students' willingness to participate, noting that victims who are forced into a restorative circle or conference could be re-victimized if they are not ready or the offender is not adequately prepared.

Time

Time repeatedly was described as a barrier to the implementation of restorative practices, yet the administrators all emphasized how the extra time they spend investigating an incident is worthwhile. *Vern* commented that it was "important time," while *Amelia* noted that time was not an issue, but personal effort was. *Pearl*'s words were "the time is worth it." *Amelia* and *Bryce* also noted that a longer investment of time was made early on but that they were willing to put in extra "up-front" time if it saved time and energy later. Both head principals stated that when the time was invested early on to explore problems, hours were saved later in the year. *Clint* observed,

> [With] restorative, you spent a lot of time on the understanding part, trying to look at, what is the foundational stuff, what's going on in this kid's background in school, or what's going on at home? It takes time to gather that information.

The student support manager, *Luke*, reflected on the extra time, noting repeatedly that "and again, it takes time and then administrators are busy, teachers are busy." In discussions with each administrator, the investigation of the incident and taking extra time to hear a student's perspective on the incident were considered restorative work. While these discussions are

important to understanding the situation and incident, they are not considered a formal restorative practice.

Speaking directly about restorative conferences, *Pearl* spoke to the challenge of doing a restorative conference promptly. Even with the more flexible alternative schedule, finishing the entire conference process quickly is difficult. Aligning the schedules of those involved to do a proper pre-conference for each student, then ensuring they both attend on the same day to do a full restorative conference, was sometimes difficult in her setting. She gave an example that was sitting on her desk. One student was gone, then the other, then she was out of the office, so it had been a month. *Pearl* commented that it was unfortunate that it could not be done right away, but that was the reality.

Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Principals did not consider Culturally Responsive School Leadership. When asked about their thoughts and beliefs about it, more than one said they don't consider it, stating instead that they treat each student as an individual. *Clint*, the head principal at Rosewood, commented

> I don't believe our school district, any of our schools in our school district, are out there targeting just Native American kids. We have a lot of other kids from other ethnic backgrounds that are truant and have behavioral issues, too. It's just there are per population basis more of that tied to our Native American students. But that's also a direct result of the facts.

All administrators spoke of respect and honor for all students in their building. It has not been a district focus or initiative to teach administrators directly about Culturally Responsive School Leadership.

Administrators look at each student individually; however, over time, the phenomenon of suspending minority populations at higher rates has persisted. In the interviews, administrators at Rosewood High School brought up the idea of collective responsibility or ownership of the data. Two administrators reflected that if the numbers are off in terms of disproportionately suspending minority students, it is their responsibility to correct the problem. *Bryce* from Rosewood said, “I know I'm really proud to say that the color of a person, or the status of a person, in my mind, makes no difference of what my decisions are going to be about the consequences.”

Administrators are dealing with behaviors, situations, and events that did not happen in their presence. *Bryce* at Rosewood High School brought up an undiscussed element of differential processing. Differential processing pins the differences in discipline rates on the administrator. But in his interview, he commented, “What we don't control is what gets reported to us [from teaching and support staff] and that part of it, you know, can lead to a broader conversation of, ‘All right, well, why were more [minority] kids reported to us?’” He said, “If it's strictly about the behavior, then great. If it's not that, I hope we would recognize that and deal with it.”

In discussing Culturally Responsive School Leadership, *Truman* from Sage Tech High said, “I guess the best way I can put it is, if you use restorative practices, it takes away a lot of the punishments that tend to get hoisted on a certain group because we use restorative practices.” The tradeoff from suspension to an apology or other alternative prevents the severity of the consequence to increase as quickly.

Summary

Based on the archival data, documents, and interviews, a greater understanding of and answers to the research questions were achieved. Perceptions and actions of leaders emerged through specific themes: in-school suspension, consequences, teaching restorative practices, misunderstanding of restorative practices, willingness, time, Culturally Responsive School Leadership, and the effect of COVID-19. The administrators perceive that other staff members' understanding of restorative practice is a barrier, as is time. Although each school utilizes its ISS differently, all administrators suggested that consequences still occur, but they conceptualized the consequences differently.

Looking at all data, progress towards restorative practices has been made. The OCR data provided a reason for the school district to look for alternatives to punitive discipline. The previous assistant superintendent set the groundwork and facilitated the shift toward restorative practices in the discipline matrix. The local district attorney simultaneously trained many administrators on Victim Offender Conferencing. All administrators seem willing and ready to listen to students, provide guidance, and invest time in those students who are struggling behaviorally. The biggest barrier seems to be understanding by administrators, teachers, and other support staff about whole-school implementation.

Chapter 5 brings the four previous chapters together. It returns to the problem, the literature review, and the methodology and offers a final summary. District 22 is in the midst of implementing restorative practices. As implementation moves forward potential issues experienced the knowledge gained from the interviews, experiences, information, and historical data can inform future implementation challenges.

Chapter 5

Summary

Purpose of Study

It is useful to examine the perceptions and beliefs, actions, and perceived barriers of current practitioners of restorative practices for future planning. The District 22 implementation of restorative practices began in 2019 and is entering its third year of use. Seven leaders in the district were interviewed, along with the gathering of archival data, district documents, and presentations, to develop a descriptive case study. This report informs readers of the current implementation and utilization, identifying themes and a synthesis for readers to begin future work from. The purpose of this study was to determine educational leader beliefs, experiences, actions, and outlooks surrounding the implementation of restorative practices.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study:

1. How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence the implementation of restorative practices?
2. What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?
3. What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when considering school-wide restorative practices?

Conceptual Framework

Recent writing on Equity Literacy and Culturally Responsive School Leadership conceptually grounds the study. Research on these related but different concepts is new and gaining traction (Gorski, 2019; Khalifa, 2018). The behaviors that administrators with Equity

Literacy and Culturally Responsive School Leaders possess are simplified to the recognition of inequity or bias, action in response to it, and then sustaining the initiative or ideology in meaningful ways. The implementation of restorative practices fits in the action step because it is a change that could mitigate differential processing.

Literature Review

The literature review examines the most current literature on the effects of suspensions, implementation of restorative practices, leadership, and barriers to implementation of restorative practices, giving a balcony view of ways schools are challenged to improve assigned consequences and just how they might be able to do it. The progression from the historical background to a potential strategy informs readers of the problem and a possible solution.

Historical Background on Discipline and Restorative Justice

Student misbehavior at school is not new, but zero-tolerance policies have changed the view of school discipline (Okilwa & Roberts, 2017). It has become widely believed that schools have overused suspensions (Fabelo et al., 2011; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Skiba et al., 2002). Although offenses for out-of-school suspensions are usually serious, some schools have overused in-school suspensions for more minor offenses (Pfleger & Wiley, 2012). Along with the overuse of suspensions, scholars report negative effects of suspensions such as lower engagement, increased school failure, and eventual dropping out (Mansfield et al., 2018; Sandwick et al., 2019). These trends have led many educational leaders to seek alternatives such as restorative justice practices.

Conceptually, restorative justice is the idea that when wrongs are committed, they impact not only a victim but the community and the offender (Gonzalez et al., 2019;

Hopkins, 2016; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012; Thorsborne & Blood, 2013; Zehr, 2015). The ramifications of the event need to be addressed and processed for emotional healing for all parties (Umbriet et al., 2015). The strategies and tools to undertake the emotional work of restorative justice have been vague or not specifically defined, but the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) has published work centering on 11 Essential Elements for Whole School Implementation (IIRP, 2010).

Implementation of Restorative Practices

The 11 Essential Elements for Whole School Implementation (IIRP, 2010) are broken into broad-based, targeted, and school-wide elements for educational professionals to utilize to build relationships and promote positive discipline. The school-wide elements are affective statements, restorative questions, small impromptu conferences, restorative staff community, and understanding of the fundamental hypothesis. These are elements that all staff can learn and utilize. The broad-based elements are for people in the school community that deal with students for longer time periods such as counselors, teachers, and administrators. The broad-based elements are fair processes, restorative staff community, reintegrative management of shame, and restorative approaches with families. Finally, a school that implements restorative practices will utilize the restorative conference as the most formal and targeted element of the 11 Essential Elements.

Educational Leadership

The role of the leader is critical to the success of restorative practices. Culturally Responsive School Leaders and those that have Equity Literacy are poised to utilize restorative practices as a vehicle to address exclusionary discipline. The Culturally Responsive School Leader and those who have studied Equity Literacy focus on recognizing

and addressing inequity, such as disparities in suspension data, and work to sustain changes that can discourage inequity.

Perceived Barriers to Implementation of Restorative Practices

As restorative practices have gained popularity, challenges to implementation as well as criticisms have emerged (Song & Swearer, 2016). Many have seen the initiative as undefinable because there are deep human emotions that are variable from person to person (Thorsborne, 2016). In concert with indefinability, many have criticized the inconsistency of the model of restorative practices (Buckmaster, 2016; Erb & Erb, 2018; Gonzalaz et al., 2019; Payne & Welch, 2018; Schiff, 2018). Although there is a manual from the International Institute of Restorative Practices, many practitioners are unaware of it and, therefore, critical of the variation.

Time is also a large multifaceted barrier (Song & Swearer, 2016). Training staff and making philosophical changes take time to implement (Amstatz & Mullet, 2015), as does the actual act of restorative practices. For example, taking time to have a conference requires planning, organization, and follow-through.

Methodology

This study is qualitative. It examined historical data in a descriptive, investigatory manner. The case study structure allowed the comparison of two high schools within the same district after the district's move to incorporate restorative practices through the revision of their discipline matrix. The analysis of historical data established a framework for understanding why the district administration would make the change, while interviews and document analysis led to a greater understanding of the current administrators' perceptions.

Case Selection and Setting

The two high schools that were chosen for this study are similar demographically but differ in size. Rosewood High School is a large comprehensive high school that serves over 2,000 students annually. Sage Tech High is a much smaller school enrolling only about 350 students annually. It is an alternative school that does not have extracurricular programs and is focused on personalized learning. Many students transfer between the schools.

Participants

Administrators at the two case schools and the student success manager were chosen for interviews. Seven interviews were achieved: four at Rosewood, two at Sage Tech High, and the district perspective from the student success manager.

Data Collection

Archival data gave the reader background information on the district and each high school, as well as provided a historical context for the move toward integration of restorative practices into the district. Data from the Office of Civil Rights was obtained along with presentations to the Board of Education for the school district. The data from the Office of Civil Rights was analyzed to look at percentages of students suspended out of total student populations.

Before the first interview, a mock interview was done with a principal not involved in the study. Then, official interviews were conducted via Zoom with four assistant high school principals and two principals at two high schools, and the student success manager for the school district. The interviews lasted anywhere from 35-65 minutes and were semi-structured, focusing on the research questions stated above.

Documents were gathered from the district webpage, the student success manager, and the assistant principals. Each document was reviewed, looking for the authors, revision dates, and restorative practices mentioned or utilized.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data for this study came in spirals. Initially, the archival data set the stage for understanding the change being instituted by the school district. Next, data and information from the district website and district sources were examined. Recorded meetings describing the change to restorative practices and reports to the Board of Education were transcribed, reviewed, and analyzed. Interviews with the assistant principals and other participants were conducted and additional forms and documents were requested. Upon receipt of all information, documents, and interviews, themes were determined through the continuation of the spiraling that began with the archival data.

Yin (2018) describes a cross-case synthesis as a very appropriate method when only two cases are being analyzed. The cross-case synthesis allowed for a holistic look at each case and theme independently, then a comparison across the cases to develop answers to the research questions originally posed.

Cross-Case Synthesis

The cross-case synthesis considers all sources of evidence. It depends heavily on "argumentative interpretation," not strict tallies of words or data (Yin, 2018, p. 198). Similarities and differences between the two high schools arose primarily from the interviews of administrators and the student support manager. The ensuing synthesis directly addresses each research question based on the impression and interpretations gleaned from a holistic look across both cases.

Beliefs (RQ 1)

How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence the implementation of restorative practices?

Administrators are hesitant to ask teachers to do more. The principals have attended victim offender training and helped overhaul the discipline matrix. They want students to be successful and recognize that solving problems at the roots is best. Administrators believe that the principles of restorative practice are more effective in the long term. In one way or another, all expressed that the investment of time, up front and early in a situation, can lead to resolution more efficiently. However, *Clint* summarized their predicament:

> I've been a building principal for over 20 years. I hear a lot of these sound bites at the district level. But what happens a lot of times is we pile too much on staffs, on the schools: We're not mental health experts.

The perception that restorative practices require time and training and take away from the academic focus of the classroom makes administrators feel like they can do it in the office, but that teaching staff does not need to.

Actions (RQ 2)

What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?

Administrators have worked with central district officials to revise the long-term suspension guidelines and create a re-entry plan for those students returning to school from long-term suspension; they have also changed ISS situations and changed how they interact with students. Four attended training on Victim Offender Conferencing through the District Attorney's office. Yet no administrator mentioned the International Institute of Restorative Practices' 11 Essential Elements (2010). These Essential Elements are organized to make

restorative practices more accessible to all staff. The Victim Offender Conference is the most formal, targeted element and most time-intensive of all 11 elements. It would allow more of the restorative work to be done outside of the office walls.

Barriers (RQ 3)

What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when considering school-wide restorative practices?

The stated barriers were primarily time and misunderstanding of restorative practices. Every leader recognized that conversation and background work took more minutes than simply assigning a consequence. This was the primary barrier, although administrators seemed very willing to undertake restorative practices.

Most administrators did not feel an obligation to old "traditional" discipline methods. When asked specifically about whether they felt pressure from the school community to apply specific consequences, most replied that such pressure came only from "old school" thinkers and it did not resonate or change their minds about what they would do.

The previous assistant superintendent was a major proponent of the new discipline matrix. He was leading the change through professional development toward restorative practices described in the executive summary in 2019. The new stated goals from the new assistant superintendent do not address any aspect of behavior or inequity. The Whole Child Committee still has restorative practice and cultural responsiveness as goals.

Trustworthiness

Returning to the concept of validity, or trustworthiness, for a qualitative study, all aspects defined by Shenton (2004)—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—have been at the forefront of this research. When considering credibility, all

OCR data has been reviewed with a colleague, and an audit trail maintained to allow for repetition of reported statistics. Member checks were utilized throughout the interviews. Peer debriefing enabled the researcher to check interpretations and implications. The clear descriptions of research procedures and findings allow for transferability and dependability. Finally, confirmability is evident in the audit trail detailed in Chapter 3 and the limitations and the positionality statement that follows.

Limitations

There were three limitations to the study. First, due to the global pandemic, the interviews were conducted via Zoom. This changed the dynamic of the interviews slightly, making them less conversational than they may have been in person. Next, the global pandemic interfered with the implementation of district-level professional development and possibly changed administrator priorities as well as student behavior. The district in which the study was conducted attempted in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. Many students elected to attend other schools, homeschool, or participate in distance learning to avoid campus. Students who did attend on-campus learning were required to wear masks. The lower number of students and the mask requirement changed not only the social dynamic but the number of incidents administrators handled. This may have changed the administrator's perception of restorative practices or discipline at the time of the interview. Additionally, the added stress of the COVID-19 pandemic and stress of the school year could have impacted administrator perceptions and opinions on all school matters.

Positionality Statement

As the primary researcher for this study, I am positioned to see from the perspective of a high school teacher. I have encountered some student behavior in the classroom but have

limited experience from the office as an administrator. I have completed a 180-hour internship in preparation for a principal role. As a teacher for 15 years, I have a strong understanding of the general workings of a school.

Discussion

The essence of this study was to learn about school administrators' perspectives and actions. Exploring the archival data, documents, and interviews showed that the school district has a strong start to implementing restorative practices. Three of the four current assistant principals interviewed are grounded in the restorative conference process from the Victim Offender Conference training they attended with the district attorney's office. The training, along with the former assistant superintendent's leadership toward revision and implementation of a new discipline matrix, set administrators up to welcome restorative practice incorporation into their daily routine. Without more direct training for teaching and support staff, however, the expectation that teachers and other staff participate in conferences or utilize some of the broad-based or school-wide strategies has stalled. The COVID-19 pandemic and the transition of a new assistant superintendent have made further saturation of restorative practices questionable.

Situating this data within the historical data, the Office of Civil Rights data shows a higher proportion of minorities, particularly Native American students, being assigned to suspensions. Fifteen percent of students at Rosewood and nearly 37% of students at Sage Tech High received in-school suspension in the early 2000s. Second, the proportion of minority students *school-wide* compared to the proportion of minority students *suspended* does not match closely. For example, in 2019-2020, American Indians made up 19.8% of the school population at Rosewood, but American Indians made up 35.4% of all in-school

suspensions. Analysis of the historical data has led to recent district training and work that shows a move to restorative practices to mitigate the discrepancies.

Considering the conceptual framework of the study, most school leaders showed some equity literacy, but do not fit the definition or defined behaviors of a Culturally Responsive School Leader. *Clint* is closest by being more aware of the discipline disparity and encouraging the Essential Understanding of the local Native American group use for his social studies and English teachers. Most indicated Culturally Responsive School Leadership was not something they had heard of or thought about frequently, but that they attempt to honor each person as an individual. Similarly, differential processing was a new term to the administrators at both schools, but they did indicate that they wanted to do what was best for the individual student.

Gregory et al., 2018 identified differential processing as a reason for disparities in discipline data. Simplifying discipline disparities to differential processing will inadequately and ineffectively attempt to solve the problem. The complexities that appear in school discipline are multifaceted including, but not limited to, teachers' viewpoints, students' perspectives, administrators' experience, time, and school culture. School staff may not yet have the resources to administer restorative practices properly at the high school level.

Uncontrollable Variables of Study

Two large factors affect this study: OCR data delay and the COVID-19 pandemic. First, OCR data is delayed by two to three years. Historical data shows raw suspension data in a uniform, comparable format with specific guidelines and requirements for entry. This data appears every two years and is reported on the odd year. Although delays are expected for the collection and analysis of data, it is surprising and unfortunate that more recent data is

not available. Next, COVID-19 affected data for the fall of 2020 as well as the spring of 2021. COVID-19 was a major disruption of all aspects of school, student behavior, and administrator job duties. It is unknown exactly how it affected this study.

Conclusions

Administrators are willing to do restorative practices. In the evaluation of both cases, data analysis by leadership teams over the years have made administrators at both schools aware of inequities in suspension data. Hence, they are willing to try alternatives to avoid suspending students. Triangulating the data sources shows a move toward restorative practices over the last four years, facilitated by the district attorney's juvenile diversion program.

Most administrators were enacting restorative practices in their realm but had not initiated training for teachers or other support staff. As the researcher, I feel that training with the restorative options in the new discipline matrix is insufficient to facilitate widespread knowledge or in-depth understanding of restorative practices at the classroom level. Training on the other ten elements of the International Institute of Restorative Practices' Whole School Implementation guides schools in designing professional development for their staff and creating a plan for enactment.

Clint, from Rosewood High School, was the administrator who was most like the Culturally Responsive school leader Khalifa writes about. *Clint* acknowledged the data on inequity as well as the stress teachers already feel (Khalifa, 2016). He was acquainted with his current reality, however, knew that to sustain long term change, he would need additional staff. He was aware of current initiatives to teach the Oceti Sakowin standards and utilize

restorative practices but was unwilling to invest further into an initiative without ongoing support.

The administrators do not seem bothered by barriers to implementing restorative practices in the office. All interviewees explained that training and misconceptions by the larger school community (students, parents, teachers, and support staff) is a hindrance to participation and the use of restorative practices. No administrator described specifically the 11 Essential Elements or referenced them, indicating that they are missing an important resource. Although the Essential Elements are not the only avenue for learning more, it is likely the most comprehensive way to understand the school-wide implementation of restorative practices. All four active assistant principals were willing to give the extra time to investigate and problem solve with students, yet most did not describe a divergence from their current practice.

Fidelity

The student success manager, *Luke*, mentioned that implementation with fidelity was a challenge for the school district. Numerous initiatives are introduced yearly, and without fidelity, the project may be inaccurately gauged by administrators and teachers. Restorative practices done lightly may not do enough, while full implementation of restorative practices may be very effective.

Recommendations for Practice

Understanding the history, beliefs, actions, and perceived barriers of current high school administrators leads to recommendations for practice. The themes and conclusions drawn from this study indicate that administrators want to do the best for the students in their charge. How to do that is the biggest question. Recommendations include the following:

1. All staff should be trained on the schoolwide elements of the 11 Essential Elements. Particular attention and discussion centering on the Fundamental Hypothesis should occur annually. All staff must know the reasoning behind restorative practices before effectively using the schoolwide and broad-based elements.
2. Enhanced training should be implemented on Culturally Responsive School Leadership for administrators. Many seemed willing, but not well informed in the sustained effort required. All staff should receive equity literacy training. Although Culturally Responsive School Leadership is critical, general staff should receive training on equity literacy due to the accessible nature of the training.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are numerous possibilities for future study, including the following:

1. The International Institute of Restorative Practices has 11 Essential Elements. Analyzing the Essential Elements alongside stages of system change would allow practitioners to understand the order in which the Essential Elements should be introduced for maximum buy-in from staff.
2. A study could look at professional development to lead such a change. This should focus on the assistant superintendent's choices in professional development and initiatives across a school district.
3. The culture and community where restorative practices are implemented with fidelity should be analyzed. Analysis of school culture before and after school-wide implementation of restorative practices could show stakeholders clear benefits.

4. In 2018, the state ranked near the top of the nation for the number of incarcerated juveniles proportionally per capita. Further study could seek to understand the connection between school and prison to determine a school's role.

5. School-wide Positive Behavior Intervention Support and restorative practices overlap in some regards. More research should be done on the effectiveness of each and how the initiatives can work together.
6. Extension of the Conscious Discipline framework utilized in elementary schools may be useful and dovetail with restorative practices.

Summary

Restorative practices have the potential to positively impact student's experience at school. This study examined administrator perceptions and beliefs on actions they can take and barriers they may encounter. In District 22, more professional development on the Essential Elements of Restorative Practices, equity literacy, Culturally Responsible School Leadership and continued guidance from the school district will further the implementation of restorative practices at the high school level. Utilization of alternative discipline options based in restoration allow students to escape harsh consequences that can have lasting impacts on classroom performance. Results from interviews indicated administrators are poised and ready to receive district guidance and are willing to utilize restorative options if provided resources.

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Appendix A

Administrator Interview Questions

Research Questions

Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed, especially this year with all of the complexity COVID has brought. I'll start by asking questions about your role, background, and experience and move into how your school has incorporated restorative practices and wrap up with questions pertaining to any barriers you have experienced.

Is it okay that I record this Zoom meeting? _____

- Demographic data
    a. What race would you say best describes you?

    b. How long have you worked in education?

    c. Tell me about you and your school. How long at this school?
        i. What are some of the best things about your school?
        ii. What are some of the most challenging things?

    d. How long have you been responsible for discipline?

Leadership: How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence the implementation of restorative practices?

- What knowledge, strategies, and beliefs are needed for a school leader to utilize schoolwide restorative practices?

- Culturally Responsive School Leadership is school leadership that intentionally focuses on marginalized or invisible populations of a school. It centers student's and teachers' cultural norms and brings their interests, families, and knowledge base to the forefront of planning and responding (Khalifa et al., 2016; Ylimaki & Jacobson, 2012). Explain your beliefs about culturally responsive school leadership?

- What are your deciding factors when you choose to implement restorative practices for a student?

- According to Gregory et al. (2018) differential processing occurs when there are racial disparities in educator decisions regarding the consequences in response to an individual discipline incident (Gregory et al., 2018). How do you prevent differential processing?

Action: What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?

- In 2019-2020 the discipline matrix was re-written to include restorative practices; how has that influenced how incidents are responded to?
    a. Reflecting on data from the last three years, how has the new matrix affected your assignment of consequences?
- Please describe the ISS room at your school. What is its primary function?
- What training and background were provided in relation to implementing restorative practices?

    a. What strategies or actions have you implemented that are unique to your school?

- Describe the restorative practices that have been implemented in your school? Which do you believe is most effective?
- What steps did you take? If someone were to repeat the process, what would that look like? What did you learn from your experience?
- Switching from whole school to the classroom level, how do restorative practices appear in the general education classroom?
    a. What type of training did staff receive?
- How will you sustain the change to restorative practices?

- Who is in charge of making sure restorative practices are consistently implemented? How do you or would you measure implementation success?

Barriers: What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when implementing schoolwide restorative practices?

- What barriers have you encountered?

- Do you feel time is a factor in implementation of restorative practices? Please explain.

- Do you feel pressure from the school community (families, teachers, others) to implement more punitive practices? If so, how so?

Appendix B

Document Analysis

What is the topic of the document?

Who created/submitted the document?

When was the document last revised or created?

Key words or strategies relating to restorative practices:

School-wide Elements

Affective Statements, Restorative Questions, Small Impromptu Conferences, Proactive Circles, Responsive Circles, Fundamental Hypothesis

Broad Based Elements

Fair Processes, Restorative Staff Community, Reintegrative Management of Shame, Restorative Approaches with Families

Targeted Element

Restorative Conference

Noteworthy components:

Appendix C

Restorative Practice Menu

The menu is laid out in a progressive manner. Administrators will have the discretion, according to the circumstances of the incident, whether it is a first, second, or third offense, and ensure that they are developmentally/culturally responsive. Administrators, please be sure to record your selections in Skyward.

Record Warning	Make Amends	Referral to Counselor
Apology	Make Up Time	Refer to Health Professional
Student Conference	Redo Assignment for Credit	Refer to Outside Agency (Lifeways)
Parent Contact	Reflection Form	
Parent Conference	Conflict Resolution	
Parent/Student Conference	Success Plan	
Student Contact	Plan of Action	
	Community Service	
	Restitution	
	Restorative Conference (w/victim's permission)	

Appendix D

Sample of Discipline Matrix

Behavior	Class	Infraction Definition	Interventions/Consequences Menu		
		1st Violation	2nd Violation	3rd Violation	4 or more violations
Minor Vandalism	3	• Refer to Restorative Menu • Detention/ISS (1 day)	• Refer to Restorative Menu • ISS (1-3 days)	• Refer to Restorative Menu • Referral to Law Enforce-ment • ISS (3-5 days)	• Refer to Restorative Menu • Referral to Law Enforce-ment • OSS (3-5 Days) • OSS (10 days) • PFAA 45 (more than 4)

Appendix E

Long-Term Suspension (LTS) Procedure

Week 1 & 2 (Student in OSS)

- Referring administrator
    - Submit PFAA request
    - Schedule Tier 3 Team meeting (Tier 2 & 3 PBIS coach, Intervention specialist, Teachers, School counselor, Social worker, Parents and Student if possible)
        - Clarify academic expectations for student during LTS
        - Consider supports and resources available to the student and parents
        - Review any requirements to be fulfilled by student before he/she is eligible to return
        - Designate Tier 3 Team point person to monitor student progress
        - Develop plan and schedule subsequent meeting dates
    - Contact LTSR (Teacher Name) to discuss plan and expectations
    - Contact student's parents to discuss:
        - LTS supports
        - Academic expectations
        - Timeline & important dates
        - Re-entry requirements

Week 3

- LTSR Supervisor
    - Student orientation
    - Contact parents
    - Contact student's Tier 3 Team point person

Week 4 – Return

- LTSR Supervisor
    - Monitor student progress
    - Communicate with student's Tier 3 Team as needed
    - Ensure re-entry requirements are in progress
- Tier 3 Team Point Person
    - Communicate with LTSR Supervisor as needed
    - Conduct at least one progress report midway through suspension
        - Check student grades/missing assignments
        - Contact teachers to discuss progress
        - Contact LTSR Supervisor to discuss attendance
        - Contact parents to discuss student needs and supports

Prior to Return

- Referring administrator
    - Schedule Tier 3 Team meeting
        - Prepare for student return
            - Ensure re-entry requirements have been completed
            - Discuss support plan for successful transition and expectations/responsibilities for progress monitoring
    - Schedule restorative re-entry meeting with Tier 3 Team, student, and parents
        - Meeting should focus on student's strengths, moving forward, and adult support

After Return

- Continue monitoring student progress
- Communicate successes and concerns with parents
- Conduct Tier 3 Team meeting to evaluate effectiveness and adjust

Appendix F

RESTORATIVE WELCOME AND RE-ENTRY CIRCLES

Welcomes students back after an absence due to incarceration or for other reasons. The Circle is to welcome and assist in re-entering school in a healthy and positive way.

OPENING

- Welcome everyone and commend them for committing to this process and supporting this student.
- Introduce talking piece – it gives you permission to speak, but also gives you permission to listen to others, rather than just waiting for your turn to speak.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLE

Round 1: Introductions and Relationship Building

- Identifies commonalities – what makes us all similar

Round 2: Strengths

- Each person says what they think the student's strengths are.
- Circles are solution-focused and strength based (what's good about the student and how can their strengths help them have successful lives).

Round 3: Values

- In this round, agree on the things that are needed to be able to have a productive conversation.
- If there's a value that someone disagrees with, have another round to bring it up and talk about it.

Round 4: Support

- What do you have to give to support this student?
- Talk directly to him/her.

Round 5: Needs

- Tell the student what you all need from him/her.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

- Reconciliation
    - Who was affected by your past behavior that brought you here?
    - How were they affected?
    - What might be done to repair the harm?
- Needs
    - What do you need for a successful re-entry back into school?
    - Make a list of possibilities for each need, then ask the student which they'd like to include in the transition plan.
- Supports
    - On-campus go-to person(s)
    - Plan monitors

SCHEDULING RE-CIRCLES/PROGRESS MONITORING

- Check progress/Bring the Circle back together in 30 days to see the progress and celebrate

CLOSING

- *Round 6*: Growth
    - Every person in the Circle compliments the student on something they learned about him/her at the Circle or on anything else.
- Show some love – line up, offer the student and the parents a hand or hug, and a smile
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSJ2GPiptvc&feature=youtu.be

Appendix G

Comment Analysis

Leadership: How do leadership perceptions of restorative justice influence implementation of restorative practices?

School	Comment	Theme
Sage Tech	“They (the teaching staff) are working from the angle of ‘what's best for students?’”	Student Centered
Rosewood	“We want to remind people to have the ‘heart of a teacher’”	Student Centered
Rosewood	“Whose needs are being met? “	Student Centered
Sage Tech	“I don’t think about Culturally Responsive School Leadership (CRSL). I do want to resect and honor everyone that I work with from wherever they’re coming from.”	CRSL
Sage Tech	“What the adults in the building view as misbehavior is communication and lack of understanding.”	CRSL
Rosewood	"We should appreciate the culture of every person who we come in contact with, absolutely every one of them."	CRSL
Rosewood	“It is our responsibility to become more aware of all of our student’s backgrounds and needs and sensitivities and interests.”	CRSL
Sage Tech	“I guess the best way I can put it is: if you use restorative practices, it takes away a lot of the punishments that tend to get hoisted on a certain group, because we use restorative practices.”	CRSL
Rosewood	“I don't believe our school district, any of our schools in our school district are out there targeting just Native American kids. We have a lot of other kids from other ethnic backgrounds that are that are truant and have behavioral issues too. It's just there are per population basis more of that tied to our Native American students. But that's also a direct result of the facts.”	CRSL
Sage Tech	“Introducing more units into the curriculum that are about a certain culture or that focus on a certain culture, that some of the kids are in. . . creating choice at every step of the instructional process…(it keeps going)”	CLTR
Rosewood	"I get to know people, we can make easier headway when challenges arise."	Relationships
Rosewood	“And then it becomes about the action and the offense, not the relationship. The relationship doesn’t really deteriorate if you do it the right way.”	Relationship

Rosewood	“I think I feel that important (that the student believes a consequence is fair) b/c that's part of building a relationship with the student.”	Relationship
Rosewood	“So the moral of the story is with, with positive interventions and more restorative practices that were able to actually handle issues better in a shorter period of time, while also maintaining a positive relationship with the students.”	Relationship
Sage Tech	“It’s how we operate.”	Philosophy
Sage Tech	“Even if it isn’t perfect, it is still worth it.”	Philosophy
Rosewood	"I truly believe there's good in everyone. I think these kids make mistakes."	Philosophy
Rosewood	"But what we are trying to change is beliefs or your philosophy, so we're trying to change those people's ideas and philosophies and that is not easy. It is not easy."	Philosophy
Rosewood	“It is just how I work with kids. You know I had a lot of training in the Love and Logic way back.”	Philosophy
Rosewood	“I think if people understood what restorative practices really means, you would find less resistance to it."	Philosophy
Rosewood	"I think people that have a natural tendency to interact with other humans."	Philosophy
Sage Tech	“I think the great equalizer when it comes to handling these things correctly, is using restorative practices, because every incident, we can give the student and the family choices as far as how they would like to resolve the issue. We can offer them, we often offer a choice of traditional consequences. We tell them exactly what it'll be, according to the book after we've called the districts, or we can do a restorative conference or restorative action and that's kind of a logical consequence.”	Philosophy
Sage Tech	“Oh, it's been a dramatic improvement. It's given us much more flexibility to address the individual issues.” “We just want to continue to do what we're doing and get better at it, because I feel like we're incorporating restorative practices in school about as much as you possibly can be, of course, we'll learn, and we'll learn new ways to incorporate them.”	Philosophy or Reflection
Rosewood	“We can have empathy and compassion and trying to do SEL stuff and then have an old school administrator there who just wants to punish kids all the time that doesn't work either.”	Philosophy

Rosewood	“So what we came up with our ways two different ways to handle things, so the matrix reflects a far less punitive approach to dealing with student behaviors, which is probably a good thing in some aspects.”	Philosophy
Rosewood	“Is that fair?”	Fairness
Student Support Coordinator	“There's a lot of gray in discipline. It's a lot easier in black and white world, you have right and you have wrong.”	Fairness
Sage Tech	"Like the time is worth it."	Time
Rosewood	“I think it is important time.”	Time
Rosewood	“ And does it take more time, Yeah, but if it helps, than it is worth it.”	Time
Rosewood	“Teachers should handle minor incidents while the office should handle major incidents.”	Consequences
Rosewood	“It doesn't always change the consequences.”	Consequences
Rosewood	“I am very individualized with students when they come in.”	Consequences
Rosewood	Now as I was telling staff those who want punitive all the time “These kids aren't going anywhere. We're not expelling them from school and they're going to be back. It doesn't matter how long we suspend them or how often we suspend them, they're coming back. So wouldn't you rather than consistently be suspending them time after time after time. Wouldn’t you rather put some work on the front end of it, trying to build a relationship, a better relationship. Teach this kid how to better cope with their behaviors.” Then they can be more productive.	Consequences

Appendix H

Comment Analysis

Action: What actions do leaders take to incorporate restorative practices in a school?

School	Comment	Theme
Sage Tech	"I think the school leader needs to have some training in restorative justice practices."	Training
Sage Tech	“I sought out some restorative justice training because I was very interested in it.”	Training
Rosewood	“Staff have more informal training at the classroom level.”	Training
Rosewood	“Training starts with in-service time"	Training
Student Support Coordinator	“You can actually do more harm if you don't, if you are not careful. So having that knowledge and that training is, is huge."	Training
Student Support Coordinator	"I don't think we do restorative practices, trauma informed practices, and PBIS with fidelity."	Training
Rosewood	The matrix reflects a far less punitive approach to dealing with student behaviors, which is probably a good thing in some aspects. So I think it's kind of a training tool itself for all of us because we use it, and we look at it as a training tool	Training
Rosewood	The matrix is “a living document.”	Training
Sage Tech	“I think the leader has to be trained and informed about how trauma affects people how it affects the brain and how it affects decision-making. I also think a leader should be trained in restorative justice practices: particularly how to do a victim offender conference, or restorative justice conferencing.”	Training
Sage Tech	"And teach, you know, options, you know what are some other decisions you could have made? What would, how, what might work better for you next time. Those type of things are important.”	Teaching
Student Support Coordinator	“In those cases, to recognize the harm that they have actually done because some of our offenders don't really have the concept of what harm they truly have perpetrated."	Teaching
Rosewood	“It’s important that I understand why you're doing this.”	Listening

Appendix I

Comment Analysis

Barriers: What are the perceived challenges or barriers educational leaders encounter when implementing schoolwide restorative practices?

School	Comment	Theme
Sage Tech	“The student must be willing to participate.”	Willingness
Rosewood	"It's really hard to have to only let a kid off with an apology if he refuses to apologize.”	Willingness
Rosewood	"Does the student take accountability as a student willing to work with the adult, apologize, participate in Lifeways?	Willingness
Rosewood	“But what happens a lot of times we pile too much on staffs on the schools these counselors are not administrators, we're not mental health experts.”	Willingness
Sage Tech	“But when it comes down to it, people are people are under stress, they tend to revert to what's comfortable, and what they've known.”	Willingness
Sage Tech	“There are just certain laws and policies. They're just places you just can't go. And that's more so the frustrating part is that some practices that would be really effective with certain issues are off the table. Unless you want to go through the process of, you know, getting the community to understand which is very difficult.”	Willingness
Rosewood	“They have to learn to get resources outside of school I think that we have to understand that we're an educational institution that has to be at the top of the priority list.”	Buy In
Rosewood	“I think the biggest barrier is really the reasoning behind the consequences, what are they going to look like? Should they be consequences, be punitive- because that will teach the lesson, or will that at consequence be more of a learning lesson for that student?”	Consequences
Sage Tech	“You know, and they just don't understand that good restorative practices often, the consequences are more costly to the kids, but if the traditional school consequences. And they also don't understand that, you know, suspending a kid out-of-school for smoking on campus or vaping probably isn't going to improve the situation at all.”	Consequences
Rosewood	“The sad truth is you just might not have time to be that restorative" (referring to law enforcement moving quickly).	Time
Rosewood	"Time management's huge because restorative practices take a lot more time than just assigning punitive consequences."	Time

Sage Tech	“But it is just the time, you know, if you really want to deeply resolve an issue with a student, or between students, it's going to take time.”	Time
Rosewood	“Whereas restorative you spent a lot of time on the understanding part, trying to look at, what is the foundational stuff, what's going on in this kid's background in school or what's going on at home. It takes time to gather that information.”	Time
Sage Tech	“So, I find that it saves time, in the long run, but the time up front is definitely a challenge with restorative justice, and then other challenges obviously staff buy in is always a challenge.”	Time
Student Support Coordinator	“I think there is a lot more fixed mindsets, within the realm of education than we'd like to really admit”	Mindset
Rosewood	“They look at it as not teaching kids to be responsible if you don't consecrate them whether it's behavior or grades, then they're not going to be responsible. It's teaching responsibility through negative consequences, that's the mentality.”	Mindset
Sage Tech	“Superintendent acknowledge that “Hey this is the right approach, unfortunately it's allowed by policies.” It's one of those things you've run into some time, right, is that what's written into the law and policy is often these non-restorative non culturally responsive rules that really don't help the kids, they sound good to stakeholders and constituents who don't deal with these kids, day to day, but they really don't help them.”	Mindset
Rosewood	“I've been a building principal for over 20 years. I hear a lot of these sound bites at the district level. But what happens a lot of times is we pile too much on staffs, on the schools. We're not mental health experts.”	Training